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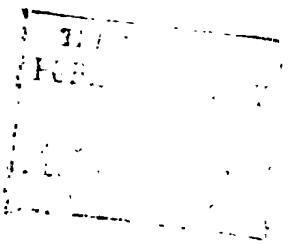

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Yours truly —
Ellen Louise.

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Moulton, Louise Chandler

THE

Waverley Garland,

A

Present for all Seasons

EDITED BY "ELLEN LOUISE." pseud.

"In eastern lands they talk in flowers,
And tell in a *garland* their loves and cares;
Each blossom that grows in their garden bowers
On its leaves a mystic language bears.
Then gather a wreath from thy garden bowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in flowers."

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PUBLISHED BY MOSES A. DOW.
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1853.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE commencement, in Boston, of a paper called the "Waverley Magazine"—the largest weekly literary publication in the world—opened a new era in the literature of this country. Its impartial and liberal policy, combined with its extensive circulation, furnished an avenue for the promotion and encouragement of genius before unknown. It brought forth from almost obscure retreats,—from the farm-house, the work-shop, and the counting-room, as well as from the seminaries of learning,—a host of talent, of the existence of which the public had hitherto been unconscious; and, though much of it rough and unshapen, like the new-dug ore, it needed only the lapse of time, and the handi-work of experience, to form it into a polished gem.

It has been the endeavor of the publisher to bring out and encourage this talent; and he presents this present volume of the "Garland" to the world as one evidence of the result of his labors. He is well aware of its imperfections; but it is the foundation of a literary superstructure, hereafter to be erected, which, it is hoped, may excel all others, in its beautiful form and proportions, and the richness of its materials.

The present volume is filled with the original productions of writers who have but lately become known to the literary world; and for interest, and purity of thought and language, it is believed will not suffer in comparison with works from pens better known to fame.

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Should the work receive a remunerating patronage from the public, it is the intention of the publisher to issue another volume, of a like character, at an early season next year, which he hopes will be found superior to the present, both in literary matter and mechanical execution.

There are many persons to whom he is under great obligations for literary favors who are not here represented; and it is a source of regret that the haste which became necessary in the preparation of the work precluded the possibility of their productions appearing. In another volume, when the editress shall have a better opportunity to revise and prepare the articles, he hopes to be able to give to the public a greater variety of taste and talent, and to recognize the names of *all* his friends among the list of contributors.

The publisher here would return his thanks to those friends who have kindly aided the talented young editress in the performance of her labors, as well as for their numerous favors to himself personally; and hopes that an intercourse fraught with so much pleasure to one, if not to both of the parties, may long continue.

MOSES A. DOW.

WAVERLEY MAGAZINE OFFICE,
Boston, Mass.

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EDITRESS' PREFACE.

THERE are few remarks more just than that one never reads the preface of a book; and one reason may be, that it is almost always tedious; but perhaps I may venture to claim the attention of my readers for a few brief moments.

I would fain bless my bantling, ere I send it forth into the world. Its face is familiar, now, and I have grown to love it; so I will pray this great bustling world to treat it kindly.

Let it come quietly among you, smiling in at your firesides, and telling you quaint old tales. Do not chide it harshly; for it is a little wreath yet, in its first season of blooming, and over the hand that twined it eighteen summers have scarcely yet breathed and brightened.

Next year, great world, if you smile on my pet this time, it shall come before you again; and then it will have grown older, and will bear the storms more bravely; but the heart of the world, great though it be, beats kindly, and I tremble not to send thee forth, little one! Go on thy good mission, and fear not but thou wilt somewhere find a weary, sorrowing heart to comfort; somewhere a bold worker of destiny will have grown tired, and, as he sits over thee, dreaming, he shall see where some poor hand has traced—in simple words, it may be, but still all heart-warm and truthful—some record of a good God's care; and the

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poor heart shall bless thee, little one, and grow once again working and trustful. Thou wilt be but one among many, and there may be dresses more choice than thine; but over thee loving hearts have prayed, and thou wilt go on, for thy mission is good!

And let me speak to you, too, kind friends and cheerful co-workers, — you who have piled the vases on my table with buds and blossoms gathered from the gardens of your own true hearts. There are no words to thank you for the great friendliness you have shown a little stranger, far away, — for the kind letters, and cheering, encouraging words; but a true heart blesses you, and for many a year will your names be green and fresh on the life-book of

ELLEN LOUISE.

ELMWOOD COTTAGE,
Pomfret, Conn.

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THE

WAVERLEY GARLAND.

Invocation

TO THE SPIRIT OF POESY.

BY THE EDITRESS.

O, COME thou near me, gentle spirit,
For I am lonely now, and very sad,
And wave-like sweep the earth-cares o'er me;
Come thou, and make me glad!
As in the days of old-time silence,
By Tempe's vale, or sweet Castalian fount,
Come thou, and with pale, fair hands lead me
Unto the Muse's mount.

There is in all this dim life left me
No joy save that which comes at touch of thine;
About my path no roses growing,
Save wreaths that thou dost twine.
Thou that for many years hast blest me,
And smiled with kind eyes on my aching heart,
Now that all other light has left me,
Thou *wilt* not now depart!

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By hours in which I've knelt and wooed thee,
'Mid shadows floating from my lamp at night,
Or with white pinions gleaming o'er me,
Beneath the pale moonlight,
By all the child-like prayerfulness
With which, before thee kneeling low, I prayed,
While scattering hot heart-tears for incense,
On altars thou hast made;—

By hidden dreamings of the blessed,
Which bind me closer unto thine and thee,
By all earth's love-light and caressing,
O, not, alas! for me!—
Leave me not, thou who, in the old-time,
Wast all that bound my trembling heart to life,
Still bend thee, with soft pinions cooling
The brow so flushed by strife!

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NOON.

BY MRS. LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

High noon of summer! and the solstice burns,
Unmitigated, with a tropic heat;
To sheltered nest the panting warbler turns;
The sluggish herds to the scant streams retreat,
And, half submerged, the cooling crystal taste;
The parched earth cracks; the farmer throws, in haste,
His hoe upon the corn-hills, where he wrought,
And from his canteen quaffs the home-brewed draught;—
But *thou*, O wearied human heart! that flies
To broken cisterns, and can find no rest,
And, when one idol in thy pathway dies,
Doth snatch another to thy bleeding breast,—
Fly to the shade of heaven's rock of trust,—
Jehovah's throne!—*that* stands when all beside is dust!

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A NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAINS.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE day was lowering, and threatened showers, when I took my seat in the stage-coach, at Pottsville, to cross the Broad Mountain, to Northumberland. Having just had an excellent dinner, I was in good humor with myself and every one about me; and this in spite of a vehicle crowded to excess, and moving at a funereal pace.

We were scarcely out of the town before we began to mount the hills, — wild, rugged elevations, sparsely covered with stunted pines or scrubby under-brush. At long intervals only, a miserable farm appeared; and there were no flowers by the road-side, except a few violets and houstonias, while in the woods I saw only an occasional laurel-blossom. As we proceeded, the aspect of the country became even more wild and bare. In many places, great fires had blackened the hills for miles. The tall, half-burnt pines, remnants of the original forest, stood up, like skeletons in chains, swaying and moaning in the wind, that, gradually rising, and coming charged with increasing dampness, foreboded an afternoon of storm.

The principal group in our coach consisted of a Hicksite Quaker, returning from Friend's meeting in Philadelphia, accompanied by his three daughters. He had on a snuff-brown coat, was short and stumpy, and was so round-shouldered that he almost appeared hump-backed. He drawled in his talk, and called hymn-book "hem-book."

Two of his daughters, with their skim-milk complexions and vacant faces, were worthy representatives of the parent stock; but the peach-like cheek, bright eyes, and plump little hand, of the other, seemed to mark her of different race altogether. "Pap," as his interesting family

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called him, had dined at our hotel, where he helped himself first, and then attended to his daughters; and he ate as voraciously as a wolf. He now favored us with his notions about Philadelphia, which he set down as a place with more show than substance, whose inhabitants were given entirely too much to "superfluities," and *other* vanities, meaning thereby fine houses, elegant carriages, pictures, jewelry, and whatever was not strictly utilitarian. The jolting of the stage, he "reckoned," would give him quite an "appetite for bed." He denounced loudly what he called the "imposition" of the landlord, who had charged half a dollar for dinner, instead of thirty-seven cents; and insisted on having the middle place on the middle seat, because he wanted room for his bags.

Gradually we wound up Broad Mountain, from the top of which I caught a fine panoramic view of the wild, undulating region that rolled away toward the Delaware, in billows frozen into everlasting rock. But to the west the prospect was obscured by the storm, which now began to break, at last, in drizzling showers. On that side the landscape was buried in what seemed a fathomless ocean of mist, that washed the mountain almost up to the very wheels of our coach, and stretched heaving to the utmost limits of the horizon, where a solitary peak rose, like a shadowy island, out of the spectral sea.

Soon the tempest, drifting eastward, enveloped us in its folds. Yet, at intervals, between the showers, the sun, bursting forth, would reveal glimpses of golden valleys far below, where silver streams danced along, and laughing trees, that overhung them, clapped their hands, like merry, gleesome girls.

Then the storm would again surge upwards; out of the vague abyss toward the west the rain would drive, like arrows of steel, against the coach windows, and we would seem to be borne by wailing winds through realms of impenetrable shadow, and by gulfs,— endless, bottomless gulfs of despair.

Toward evening, we changed horses, and were assorted by the agent into different coaches. My new companions were a country squire and his wife, returning home, a professor in spectacles, and a militia captain, who had been to town to purchase a new sword. The Joan and Darby pair dozed on the back seat, knocking their heads lovingly together, with every severe jolt. The professor exhorted us on the practical evidence

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afforded by our snail's pace of the superiority of railroads, concluding with an application of the text, to the effect that our sore bones would make us duly grateful for locomotives. The militia captain talked of the approaching Fourth of July, and boasted that he was bringing back a flag longer by three inches, at the least, than that of the rival company.

The rain was now pouring down in torrents; the twilight began to fall. We had long ago crossed the Broad Mountain, but were still among the hills, descending long and rapid slopes, only to surmount new acclivities, with slow and toilsome steps. The vast forests on this side were apparently the original wilderness.

The ancient pines and oaks, draped with moss, gave a dismal look to the scene, almost indescribable, especially as beheld through the fast-descending shadows of evening. Many of the trees had been twisted by whirlwinds, and stood splintered and ghastly in the gloomy air. Others had been bent by hurricanes or snows at an angle of forty-five degrees, where, seemingly forever falling, they dumbly implored help, but implored in vain. Still others were contorted into horrible shapes, as if they had died by lightnings, and, blaspheming as they writhed, had been transfixed in everlasting agony. As the wind shrieked in the shadowy wood, it required but little imagination to fancy that I heard their voices, lamenting, blaspheming; bewailing, blaspheming; and still lamenting and blaspheming, forever and forever. The evening shut in, and the storm increased.

The road ran in the torrents, through which the horses waded heavily, their coats smoking in the dim twilight. The squire growled, his dame "dear me" 'd, the professor snored, and the captain swore. As to myself, chilled to my very marrow, I sat calculating that we had come twenty miles in about six hours; and I began to wonder, at last, as the elder "Veller" did of matrimony, "vether it vas vorth comin' so far to get so little." Towards ten o'clock we stopped at the Bear and Fox, to take supper, which consisted of chicory coffee, fried bacon, indigestible short-cake, and villanous veal cutlets. A cheerful, blooming girl of sixteen, who waited at table, was the sole inducement to sit down. But *she* made the old kitchen look so pleasant and home-like, especially in contrast with the black tempest out of doors, that I took a slice of bread, drank a cup of water, and paid my quarter of a dollar, with as much hap-

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piness as Ledyard, when succored by one of her ministering sex in Africa.

The morning had almost broke when we reached Northumberland. A sleepy landlord came out with a shell lantern, to usher us in. The storm was passing away. Already, a few stars, here and there, shone through the drifting clouds; but I would have given the loveliest landscape in the world for the luxury of a bed. In spite of my fatigue, however, I slept but broken slumbers. All night I heard the rain descending, the water rushing, and the winds bewailing, in my dreams. I woke, four hours later, and threw up my window. The apple-trees were in blossom, just under it; the birds were singing, and the air blew in, fragrant with flowers; the blue sky and glad sunshine seemed lovelier than ever, after yesterday's rain. The quiet landscape, the Sabbath stillness, affected me with a sensation of infinite peace. Involuntarily I repeated the solemn words of the *Gloria Patri*:—

> "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
> Praise him, all creatures here below;
> Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
> Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

All nature seemed adoring its Creator, and should not I?

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ASPIRATIONS.

BY G. S. BURLEIGH.

I.

When I behold the bitterness and strife
Of man, embattled against glorious truth,
With blind malignity and fierce unruth,
Damming the pulses of the better life
Back on the heart, I turn, with sorrow rife,
To sweet-voiced Nature, whose perpetual youth
Is hope and promise; and the flower, which showeth
Like love to all that in its circle groweth,
Maketh me wish that I too was a flower,
That I might feel the sweet breath of its love,
And, like it, serve my God from hour to hour;
And, e'en when crushed by careless steps above,
Could yield the spoiler all my fragrant living,
In the most odorous breath of a divine forgiving.

II

On the clear waters of the stream I look,
And see them joyous, as they overleap
All clogs which fall, to dam them from the deep;
Then say I, "O that I were made a brook,
Which ever leapeth from its pebbly nook,
And naught from its unbounded goal can keep;
So might I bless the valleys, as I'd sweep
Still to one point, through many a sinuous crook.

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I view the stars, and sigh to be a star,
That, o'er the reach of human hate and fear,
I might roll on, God-moved, with none to jar
The eternal music of my golden sphere;
There is no thing of God's I would not be,
Rather than this repulsed and spirit-fettered *me*.

III.

Then Trust awakes, triumphant over ill,
Teaching the soul that in herself is power
To make her pure love odorous as a flower;
Though spurned, exhaling all its sweetness still,
While her whole life is crystal as the rill;
And the far stars, which on our midnight shower
Their mystic light, undimmed though tempests lower,
Shall with less glory the serene arch fill,
Than her divine thoughts, her all-spanning sphere;
And anthems nobler than creation's dawn
Heard rung from all the golden harps of morn
May the high soul pour, jubilant and clear;
There is no thing of God's that I *would* be,
Other than this pure self he would create of me.

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THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

BY STEWART ADAIR GODMAN.

THE departing rays of a summer's sun, as they crept, in slanting lines, through the bowed shutters of an upper chamber in a luxurious dwelling, brought out into bold relief a beautiful and touching picture.

No brilliant counterpart of Nature was it, shadowed forth, with fadeless colors, upon inanimate canvas, but a living, breathing group, — a masterpiece of loveliness, — directly from the faultless hand of the Supreme Artist, whose creative pencil tinted the rainbow, and whose gorgeous palette supplies the sublime hues of Flora's endless kingdom.

It was a young mother, glorious in her physical perfection, heavenly-bright from the deep affection that filled her heart, bending, in tearless agony, over the motionless form of a cherub-babe, that, sick nigh unto death, was resting upon her knees. She thought — that youthful parent — that her heart would break if he, her first-born, the very pride of her life, was taken from her. Sleeplessly, ceaselessly, patiently, she watched and nursed the innocent one; but almost hopeless did she become, as, gazing upon its little face, she beheld it becoming more and more pallid.

At last, clasping fondly in her arms the babe, humbly upon the floor the mother knelt; and, in accents deep and impassioned, she besought the merciful Father she had been taught to worship to have pity upon her, and spare her baby-boy.

As if in answer to her fervent supplications, the morning light revealed traces of improvement in the beloved one. A month flew swiftly by, and the mother's heart fairly leaped with joy at the sight of her rosy boy in blooming health; and his musical cooings, as they filled the air, sounded sweeter to her partial ear than angel minstrelsy.

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Years passed; and in a criminal court-room a dense throng of curious spectators were crowded, hearkening to the trial of a handsome and intellectual-looking youth, arraigned for forgery. The proof was conclusive; defence was useless; the penitentiary was the penalty. But, ere sentence was passed, just as the verdict of the jury was announced, a shriek, so wild, so wailing, so unearthly, that naught but a breaking heart could have uttered it, startled the occupants of that crowded court. A fainting female form was borne to the door, and, as a long veil flew back, it revealed the features — sadly changed by searing sorrow — of the mother who, long years before, had prayed so earnestly to Heaven to spare the life of that son, who, a condemned prisoner, had lived only to disgrace her. Had he not better have died when an innocent babe? Truly, God's ways are not as our ways; and he ever means more kindly by us, even in apparently dire afflictions, than our benighted natures will permit us to believe.

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ANNIE LYLE.

BY AMANDA M. DOUGLASS.

'Tis the pleasant happy May-time,
And the rills are all in tune,
And the birds are singing sweetly,
Ere the sun has reached its noon;
While the daisies and the cowslips
Bloom beside the hawthorn hedge;
With the fragrant blue-veined violets
Smiles the woodland's mossy edge;
But sweeter than the flowers,
That scent the earth a while,
And fairer than the spring-tide skies,
Is gentle Annie Lyle.
Sitting beside the cottage door,
Her fairy fingers spin,
While a sweeter voice than any bird
Makes melody within.

O, the pleasant Spring has faded
In the Summer's dusky heat,
And the honey-bee goes humming
Through the clover-fields so sweet,
And the brilliant sunshine glimmers
On the streamlet by the door,
But a stranger sits beside it,
Telling love-fraught stories o'er,

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Till sweet Annie's cheek is crimson,
And her bosom gently swells,
And her dark-fringed eyelids tremble,
As she hears the tale he tells.
Her white hands in his are folded,
And her wheel forgets to go,
As she listens to his accents,
With their music-laden flow.

Now the Summer days have vanished,
And the leaves begin to fall,
And the reapers, with their sickles,
Gayly to each other call;
While the wild grapes cluster thickly,
Purpling in the Autumn sun,
And the golden-rod is gleaming
Ere the frost hath yet begun;
Yet the buzzing wheel goes faintly,
And fair Annie sits alone;
Very tearful are her bright eyes—
For her heart's sweet hope is gone;
On her cheek the rose is dying,
Dying slowly, day by day,
For the Autumn gales have scattered
All her summer hopes away.

Sadly moan the blasts of Winter,
And the stars are cold and bright,
But she only smileth faintly
As she notes their wintry light;
For she knoweth there is no one
To be guided to *her* door;
Though her heart is with another,
He will never seek her more.

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When the snow-flakes, earthward falling,
With their white mist hid the skies,
Star-crowned angels bore the maiden
To the far-off Paradise;
But on earth, her white hands folded
Meekly on her quiet breast,
In the dark and chilly church-yard
Laid they Annie Lyle to rest!

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A NOVEMBER NIGHT REVERY.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

"Learn! the spirit's gravitation
Still must differ from its tears."
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

It is night-fall in November! — the doleful leave-taking of one of those days that hang sombre and prophetic on the snow-skirts of winter. The wind creeps with a wild, exultant kind of howl over the bleak hills, and the night-shadows marshal themselves, black and heavy, over the desolate earth, while the "weird trees" stretch their long, scraggy arms to the sky, that looks down, gray and pitiless, upon them. The flowers that, in their summer life, filled the earth with fragrance and beauty, have faded and fallen; and, as my glance wanders down the broad garden aisle, I think upon the time when those naked *parterres* fringed it with their sea of blossoms; and now nothing remains but a few rain-drenched and frost-caressed dahlias, hanging, chill and drooping, from their withered stalks — the last mournful legacy of the summer! The eglantine, that draped the portico with picturesque grace, now winds its leafless tendrils around the pillars, and clings to them, shivering, as the blighting north wind breathes upon it. It is a gloom-fraught spectacle; and, as I stand by my casement surveying it, the shadows, the night-damp and the north wind, come creeping into my heart with a subtle, paralyzing influence, until I forget that the stars are lying with their seraph glances beyond the clouds that bury them over, and the earth holds in her denuded bosom the elements of another sweet spring-time. But the gloom without is infectious, — I will gaze on it no longer!

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There! the casements are closely muffled with their white curtains. I have located the lamp, which Betty has placed upon the table, so that it floods the apartment with a dreamy, pensive light, and, snugly ensconced in the most capacious of easy-chairs, with my head pillowed against its cushioned back, though I can still hear the wind sobbing hoarsely among the elm branches, the shadow and the night-damp are passing from my heart. There is a fire burning in the grate. One of those genial, revery-inspiring fires that would have delighted the dear old bachelor heart of Ik Marvel (God bless him!), and around whose bright, shifting flames would have rolled some of his own unique and delicious imagery, dimming the eyes and warming the hearts that read it. The fire-flame rushes up madly from beneath, and coils caressingly around the dark, angular mounds of anthracite, the long, attenuated wreaths creeping like golden-hued serpents over the black mass, or like Heaven haloes wandering around the ebon forehead of the night; and the shadows start out on the opposite wall, sometimes waving like great funeral plumes, sometimes gliding and flitting along, — dim, indefinable shapes, like imps of Tartarus, — and then suddenly vanishing like the disappearing of a magician's illusory creations. And so I am sitting here, with no companions but the pensive lamp-light, the fitful fire-flame, and the waving shadows. Stay! there comes a guest! Her foot-falls are noiseless, and her forehead is benignant and serene. She approaches, and lays her mystic fingers gently upon my spirit, and points with her wand to the long vista of the past, lying sometimes in a tide of life-sunlight, sometimes in black funereal shadows, and sometimes in shadows far blacker and more fearful than funereal ones, and softly whispers "Come!" Reader, that guest is *Memory*. I shall go with her. Will you come with me?

Back, back, through intermediate years, I am wandering now, in the blank of my early child-life. Memory catches and grapples the visions, summoned by her wand, to feed the blank, each faint and shadowy as a dream of midnight, in the morning; but now my heart begins to quicken, and the visions to take form, until that dawn-life lies tangible and vivid before me.

There were but three of us, — mamma, brother Fred, and I, — while the housekeeper, the nursery-maid and the gardener, made up the

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domestic branch of our household. Our cottage home, with its long ornamental front windows, and ample porch, hidden from view by the veteran elms that were stationed on the wide front lawn, like so many sentinels, when beheld from a distance which resolved all the trees into one green, unruffled tide, had the appearance of a nest perched cosily in a mass of dark shrubbery. And so it was; and we — brother Fred and I — were its nestlings.

My child-life was a very happy one, — happy as the summer day is long, or the song of the spring bird sweet, or the August noon-sky cloudless. Our mother, with her deep brown hair and deeper brown eyes, still young, and still beautiful, though the shadow that lay always about her heart had stolen over her countenance, subduing and chastening its naturally happy expression, ever occupied her favorite chair in the ample recess by the sitting-room window, while Fred (who was three years older than myself) and I made the old walls and the wide hall which divided the house echo with our childish mirth; and then, in some pleasant pause, we would approach that chair, still preserved for its world of sacred associations, and, while those soft, warm fingers would wander caressingly among my curls, and Fred's large, brilliant eyes roam earnestly from our mother's face to mine (which always ended in his giving me my favorite *sobriquet*, "mamma's miniature"), we listened to the words that fell from those gentle lips, containing ever some precious truth-seed, which, sinking into their heart-soil, and quickened by the life shine and cloud of after years, have, I trust, brought forth some fruit for the Heaven-harvest. I used to think my mother *looked* like an angel *then;* I *know* she *is* one *now*.

In the best parlor, which was seldom used, there was a portrait, and it looked just like Fred, — only *that* was a full-grown man, and Fred was a boy. It had the same large, mischievous eyes, — the same high, white forehead, crowned with the same mass of brown-black hair. I remember one day (and it is among my earliest recollections) finding the door ajar. I peeped cautiously in, for a kind of mystery always invested that room in my childish imagination, and, seeing mamma standing before the portrait, crept softly in, and, laying my hand in hers, said, whisperingly (for the dim light and silence of the apartment oppressed me), "Who is it, mamma?" "It is your father, my child," she answered, in tones I

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had never heard before; and then she led me away, and I noticed that she was sad for a long time after. I was sorry I had asked her.

The out-door world was as much home to us as it was to the birds that flitted among the elms, or the flowers that painted the fields; and there was not a day, from the early spring-time, with its first breath of violets, to the late autumn, with its sombre sky and crackling branches, which did not find us by the brook-side, under the grove of chestnut-trees, or searching along the edge of the forest for its flowers. The silver voice of the old brook grew familiar to us as our mother's tones, as it crept stealthily through the bed of mint, and then deepened and widened about half a mile from our house, while the water-lilies bent with graceful thankfulness over the waves that fed their beauty; and in the long, fragrant summer mornings, Fred and I sat under the broad, heaving shadow of the hickory-trees, and listened to the echo of our voices winding through the dense forest that walled us in on one side, or striking against the hills towering on the other; and then, when a gleam of sunlight dashed through the hickory-trees and cut across the panting eddies below, we would know that the sun had stretched far up the slope toward its meridian sky, and hasten homeward. And then, the summer sunsets, brightest and dearest time of all, when our mother would sit in the porch, and Fred would gather the rose-buds and violets, and I would weave them into garlands for her forehead, while, far above me, with the fair twilight sky lying between, the angels were busy weaving a garland also; but fair and fadeless through eternity would be the flowers they were twining for my mother's brow, while mine would be dark and withered the next morning. I cannot bear to pass out from this child-life, for I know the black, surging shadows which lie in the "Beyond." But Memory moves her wand slowly. *Ils viennent.*

I remember how proud I was, at the anniversary of the village school, when Fred acquitted himself so nobly, distancing all his compeers, and bearing off the prize, besides winning several other marks of distinction. Mother was there, too; and her cheek glowed, and her eye kindled, as she witnessed this evidence of her boy's mental superiority. But that night, when the evening shadows began to muffle the earth, and the stars to open themselves along "the blue meadows of the skies," our mother drew us to her side, as she sat in the porch, and, in a long, ear-

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nest conversation, told Fred that it was time he should enter another school, and one possessing greater advantages than any our village afforded. He was then fourteen; and, though herself and Kate would feel very sad at parting with him, still she was convinced he would see at once it was for the best, and bear himself right bravely through all. My heart grew sadder and heavier than it had ever done, as I listened, and thought of the brook, the chestnut-trees, and the woods, and how I could never visit them after Fred went away, they would look so desolate and dreary; and I knew, when Fred gave me his good-night kiss, that he thought of them, too, though he had acceded very readily to all of mamma's propositions, and manifested a boy's interest and enthusiasm in the new world-life upon which he was to enter. That night I watered my pillow with tears. It was the first time in my life; alas! alas! it was not the last.

It had been at first decided that Fred should leave home in the following September; but I pleaded so earnestly that his sentence of banishment might be deferred until after the holidays, and alleged, in support of my cause, the fruit that was to be saved, and the nuts that *must* be gathered; beside which, I had suddenly discovered that the "out-door work," and all things connected with it, would fall into disastrous and irretrievable ruin, if not under the personal supervision of Fred, — our ever-indulgent parent at last yielded; for in her own heart was a voice which seconded all my entreaties. I was half wild with joy on the day when I obtained her consent to this delay; and when Fred and I started for the brook, and he put his arm around me, and called me his "own darling Kate," I read in that simple action, and the words which accompanied it, his gratitude for my agency in this matter, although a kind of boyish pride had ever prevented his uniting his requests with mine.

But, before the short wintry holidays, a change had come over our mother,—a slight and scarcely perceptible one, however. Her cheek had grown somewhat thin and paler; she had an occasional short, "hacking" cough, and sometimes, in the midst of conversation, she would pause and press her hand to her side, as if some sudden and acute pain had seized it; and she began to manifest a decided disinclination to make any allusion to Fred's departure; and, one day, when Fred had been launching out into a world of speculation with regard to his future school-

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life, she inquired, to our inexpressible surprise, whether he would find it so very tedious to stay at home, and keep her and Kate company during the winter. So Fred studied Latin with the minister, and romped with his sister, and talked very wisely with the gardener (he was nearly fifteen, reader, and I thought very tall and handsome at that); and the winter days, with their snow-mantle for the earth, and their snow-garlands for its trees, and the long winter evenings, with their cold, staring stars without, and their warm fires and warmer hearts within, wore pleasantly away, albeit our mother's step grew somewhat less firm, and her cough somewhat more frequent; but, so gradual was this, and so little practical acquaintance had we with the fearful but insidious disease with which our mother's fragile constitution was holding an unequal contest, that no thought of danger, no prophetic shadow of coming evil, ever cast itself upon the broad sunlight of our life paths. "When the sweet spring-time comes, with its blue sky and singing birds, and you sit under the old elms again, you will be better, dearest mother," we said; and our voices were very hopeful, for so were our hearts. And our mother would smile, — her own loving, hopeful smile, — and answer, "Yes; then, please God, I shall be better." Ah! she, too, was all unconscious of the danger.

But the spring-time came, at last, with its long, damp days, and shrouds of mist, its raw winds, and its lazy, leaden clouds, and mamma could scarcely walk across the room; and the housekeeper was sad, and the doctor looked grave, and Fred and I stood at the window, and longed for the spring-shine and song. At last it came! That long pause which Nature seems to indulge in before summoning her energies for the mighty work before her passed away. The fragrant south breeze stole up the barren *parterres*, and the sunbeams wandered, with life-giving warmth, over the denuded elm-boughs, and the spring-blossoms began to flush the hill-side, the forest and the fields; and then our mother's strength rallied, and a sudden flush, ripe and rich as that we had noticed in the heart of the June roses, sprang to the hollow in her cheek. We told her she had never looked half so pretty as she did with that hue of returning health lying there, little dreaming it was the autograph of the conqueror who had laid his fell mark upon her.

I remember me, when the violets opened their blue eyes along the

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borders of the garden-path, and the shadows of the elm-boughs shook to the south wind, that our mother would place her arm in Fred's, and walk down to the gate that bounded the long perspective. It was a pleasing sight, and I always declined an invitation to accompany them, for I loved better to stand under the portico, and watch them, as they moved slowly up the path, my mother leaning gently upon Fred, who was as tall as herself, her deep brown curls floating over his dark hair, as he bent his head to hers, in the earnestness of their conversation. I bless memory for that vision, although it lies on the border of a black, surging shadow, which is hurrying onward, and though I sit here with the tears trickling warm and fast through the fingers I have pressed tightly over my eyes.

But, when the north wind lay chained among its ice-caverns, and the air was very balmy with the breath of the late spring flowers, our mother walked no more, leaning on the arm of Fred, to the garden-gate. She could sit but a little while in her chair, by the window, and her voice grew fainter every day, albeit the smile on her lip and the rose-heart in her cheek were as bright as ever; and Fred and I grew sad, as we roamed by the singing brook, and wondered she was no better.

It is gathering around me now, that black, stifling darkness, — the darkness of the grave! I cannot pass by it, nor turn away; for it is above, beneath, and around me.

"Hush, hush, Miss Kate! Do not laugh now! Your mother is very ill." How much nearer to me now seems that moment than the scenes of yesterday! I remember how I bounded into the hall, half wild with gleeful triumph, my curls and the blue ribbons of my straw hat floating in the sunset air. It was a June day, very bright and very blue, with the summer flush all over the earth, and the song-birds welcoming the new flowers, that were everywhere bursting into life. Fred, who prided himself upon his equestrian accomplishments, was mounting his horse, when I, having coaxed the gardener into letting me take the other, joined him. We rode a long way. The beauty and the repose brooding all over the landscape crept into our hearts, and hushed their merriment; but, on our return, when the breeze that follows in the track of the declining day stirred up the leaves, and moved the still shadows, our spirits broke from the delicious dream-revery which had chained them a while; and, when we reached the road which branched off in two

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directions, about three miles from our home, leading to it by different routes, I proposed to Fred that we should make a trial of our equestrian skill by taking separate roads; and, as they both lay at an equal distance from home, the palm of success should be awarded to the one who reached it first. My proposition was eagerly assented to, and away we started. I had, however, recently discovered a new and little-frequented path, stretching through a narrow belt of woods, and communicating with the main road, thereby diminishing the distance nearly one-half. I dashed through the underwood, thinking I would enjoy Fred's surprise at my equestrian feat, and then explain the *ruse* to him; and so I reached home, sprang from my horse, and entered the house, to meet the pale face and ominous words of the housekeeper. I remember a sharp, sudden fear darting through and stilling my heart, a quick gasp for breath, and then I grasped almost fiercely the housekeeper's arm, and whispered, "Tell me, is my mother dead?" "No, darling; don't look so, don't!" said the old woman, while she stroked my ringlets, and her tears fell fast upon my upturned face.

Up the steps bounded Fred, his fine face flushed with excitement, and his light cap set jauntily on the dark, rich hair beneath it. "And so, to my infinite astonishment and discomfiture, you have distanced me, *ma chère sœur!*" he exclaimed, playfully poking among my curls with the end of his riding-whip. "Goodness, Kate! what *has* happened? You are white as a spirit," he added, springing to my side, as I turned towards him. "Hush, Fred! mamma is very ill," I whispered. My brother's face must have reflected the hue of mine, so ghastly white did it become, the next moment.

We went together to *her* room, Fred's arm around my waist,—for my trembling limbs scarcely supported me,—the housekeeper meanwhile entreating us to be calm.

We stood upon the threshold. How we passed over it I know not. There were several persons in the room; who they were I knew not; but I knew *she* was there; I saw the face, white and still as the pillows it rested on; I saw the brown hair floating away from the brow haloed by a lingering beam of the sunset. Ah! the crown that had been woven in a land over which steal no sunset shadows was finished then, and back on their massive hinges, from the walls of jasper, were rolling the gates

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of gold, while the white wings of the warden angels were outstretched over my mother's spirit-pathway. All was ready *there!* and a fearful hemorrhage at the lungs, which took place during our absence, had finished all here. "Speak to me, smile on me once again, mamma!" I shrieked, in agony I dare not think of now, as I sprang wildly to the bedside. But the white lips unclosed not to that heart-wrung appeal. *Fred and I were motherless!*

They buried her. The summer day was very bright, and its sky was very blue. God help you, reader, if you have ever stood, with bird and flower about you, and heard the dropping of the dark clods, one by one, and felt that each was falling upon your heart, crushing, shivering, breaking it! So mine felt that day; and, even now, it will not bear the retrospect.

O, it was very cold and dark — so strangely dark, though it was June-time — all through the house, after that. The rooms looked so bare, just as if some one had stripped them of all their appurtenances, and left them desolate and darkened; and yet, everything was untouched; even the sunshine slept in the corners where it always lay at noon. Nothing was changed, nothing but ——

We did not talk much then, Brother Fred and I, but we clung very close to each other, though the shadow on our hearts was too heavy for words to uplift it; still, Fred would put his arm about me, and I would sit by his side, weeping, not noisily, not wildly, but very quietly, just the tears that

> "Like a drop, which, night and day,
> Falls cold and constant, wear the heart away."

In a few days we went to the brook, thinking that the sunshine, and its joyous voice, would take the chill off our hearts; but the shine was too bright, and the brook-hymn — our hearts had no echo for it. We did not stay long.

Uncle Leonard came, soon after this. We had been expecting him daily; but his southern home was many leagues away. He was our mother's only brother, whom I had never seen; but her frequent allusions to him had created strong predilections in his favor. I thought Uncle Leonard cold and stern, at first; and, when my eyes searched his

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strong lineaments, to find there some likeness to the features I should never look upon more, I could only trace the faintest "shadowing out" of a resemblance to my mother. It was nothing more; and none but an acute observer would have detected that. But, when Uncle Leonard called me to him, and parted back the ringlets over which my mother's soft, caressing hand had wandered so often, and, looking earnestly in my face, said, in tones which made me look up,—and then I saw there were tears in his eyes,—"You are very like your mother, my child," I loved him from that hour.

A few days after our uncle's arrival, we were all in the dining-room. He pushed back his chair from the breakfast-table, and, after a few moments' deliberation, as if he were cogitating the best manner of introducing a somewhat disagreeable subject, he informed Fred and myself that circumstances demanded his immediate presence at home; that, as the guardian appointed by our parents, he had adjusted all matters relating to the estate. "And now," he added, speaking very quickly, "Fred, my boy, it is time you were preparing for college; and as for my little Kate there, we must see what enlivening effect can be produced upon those fading cheeks by sending her to school." I comprehended it at once; I was to leave home, to be separated from Fred, to enter upon a new world of strange scenes and stranger faces; (how every heart-fibre quivered at the thought!) and now there was no mother's affection to which I could make a final appeal, no maternal voice to negative the fearful decision! There was a quick heaving of my heart, as though an avalanche, cold and crushing, had suddenly been plunged on it; and then, with a convulsive sob, I flung myself into Uncle Leonard's arms, saying, "Do not say that, uncle! say anything but that! I cannot leave my home! I cannot leave my mother's grave!" and I clung to him with the wild energy which despair sometimes gives the weak. For a few moments there was no answer; and then I felt a single tear drop upon the head which Uncle Leonard had drawn very closely to him, and, a moment after, he said, very gently, "But, my child, it is for the best you should go; and I am very certain your mother, if she were here, would concur in my decision, and, for her sake, I am equally certain you would do anything; so I ask you, in her name, will you not look up, and tell me you will go?" In the wide world my uncle could not have

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found another argument so potent as that. And yet, even then, the struggle was a fierce one, but it was brief. In a short time I lifted my head, and said, though the muscles around my mouth trembled strangely with the effort, that I would go.

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The panorama that is moving before me now is a very bright one. Sweet, girlish faces, with the shadow of fair hair lying on the undimmed foreheads, move smilingly along, and the old-time words seem trembling on the sweet lips, and the old time love-light looks out of the soft eyes resting upon me, as each graceful, well-remembered figure rises and vanishes. My school-life was a very happy one. Heart-fibres were woven together, then and there, which time and distance and stranger paths in life have failed to sever. That life embraced six years.

It was at the close of the sixth session, one sweet morning in summer, when they came to me with the information that my presence was desired in the parlor. How my heart bounded! I had not seen Fred since I left home, for his college vacations and ours were not concurrent. But, meanwhile, we had maintained an uninterrupted correspondence, and my greatest incentive to improvement had been the desire that Brother Fred should not be disappointed in me. He had recently left college, having graduated with honor, and I knew it was he who now awaited my coming. The fingers that executed a hasty *coiffure* trembled a little, and my last glance at the mirror was accompanied with a little anxiety as to Fred's opinion of my *personelle*. The long flight of stairs, down which my feet had often tripped lightly, were passed very slowly then; and before I reached the landing my heart was throbbing so quickly that the balustrades, against which I leaned heavily, alone protected me from falling. There was a momentary struggle for self-possession at the door, — I opened it, and the brother of my childhood was before me! Time had moulded the splendid figure of the boy into that of early manhood, and matured the contour of the bold but regular features. There was a strange fire in the eyes that had grown still darker, — a fire which genius alone can kindle upon the spirit's altar, and to which college-life furnishes the aliment. Above those eyes rose the high forehead, with its ample intellectual developments, and about it lay the mass of brown-black hair; and yet all looking like — O, so very like — the portrait in the

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parlor at home! I had intended to be very quiet and lady-like, but, with my first glance, the strong, mysterious voice of kindred blood awoke too loudly in my soul, and, with the words "Fred, my brother!" I threw myself into the outstretched arms, and was folded with the old-time fondness to his heart; and when I looked up amid the sweet, fast-falling tears to his face, I saw that his own eyes were dimmed as he put me a moment from him, and earnestly surveyed me, and then drew me again to the heart in which I felt was my home, saying, in low, tremulous tones, "You are so like *her*, Kate!" It was the dearest compliment he could have bestowed.

We went home, Fred and I. The old housekeeper gave us a welcome of smiles and tears; but hers were not the only tears, when she told us how it reminded her of the time when a proud and newly-made husband brought his fair girl-bride to that same cottage home.

We wandered by the brook, and listened to its old music-laugh, and Fred gathered the water-lilies that fringed its margin gracefully as ever; but the brook-song did not find *quite* so deep an echo in our hearts, and the water-lilies, when I wove them into a garland, just for the old time's sake, did not look *quite* so lovely. We wandered down the broad garden path, and the elms stretched their venerable branches on either side, far above us, like aged arms spread out in benediction, and the flower-ocean rocked fair and fragrant before us. We stood under the chestnut-trees, with the broad, bright swords of sunlight plunging through the interlacing boughs, and cutting the morning's symmetrical shadows into dark, shapeless masses; but we stood oftener and we lingered longer by the drooping filaments of a weeping willow, where the myrtle darkened and the summer roses flushed two carefully-tended mounds, and where the shadows of two marble monuments blended themselves into one; for there, side by side, our parents were sleeping!

"And now, Fred, what are you going to do with me?" This interrogatory was made, several weeks after our return, as I stood, one August evening, at a deep front casement with Fred, watching the stars as they rode, host after host, into the blue sky-fields, and the newly-risen moon swept up, calm and serene, among them, and laid her veil of silver-gray on the hoary elm-tops; but my soul had been fed with emotions sweeter than any awakened by summer stars or rising moon. Fred had been

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discoursing to me, with his own brilliant, bewildering eloquence, of the far-off lands he was to visit; of wandering upon the soil, and standing, with hushed heart and quickened spirit, among the glorious statuary and decaying monuments of Greece, and beneath the sunset-skies of the seven-hilled city, whose kingdom was once the world; of gazing on her mournful yet mighty ruins, and under the ivy-mantled arches and crumbling columns of the Coliseum, and before the immortal creations of the Past, to dream of those who have mingled their dust with the soil which their works have hallowed, — those who have left names upon "the sands of time," which the waves of many succeeding ages have not washed away, — names familiar to us as the lullaby songs which floated around our cradle-slumber. But my heart had grown sad, as I listened to the young dreamer, and thought of the cold waves that would roll between us, and of the long years in which our life-paths would lie far apart; and the voice must have been very mournful that asked after its own destiny.

"You shall decide for yourself, sister mine," was Fred's reply, in light tones; for he had noted the sadness in my own, as he drew me to the light, and placed a letter in my hands, informing me he was already acquainted with its contents, as it came enclosed in one of Cousin Harry's, Uncle Leonard's only son, who was to accompany him on his tour.

"Come to us, sweet Cousin Kate;" — so ran the letter, in Minnie's soft, delicate handwriting; "our hearts are all asking for you, and our affection shall make your Virginia home very bright. I will be your sister, and my parents shall be yours; so do not, *ma chère cousin*, stay up there, like a demure little *religieuse*, in your cold New England cloister, but come where warmer skies and warmer hearts are waiting to cherish you, and we can talk to each other of the brothers who are self-made wanderers on the face of the earth." And the letter closed with words from Uncle Fred and Aunt Mary, supporting, with many cogent arguments and kindly promises, Minnie's request. I thought of my mother's grave, and then I thought that Fred would visit it with me no more, and said I would go.

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It was sunset, one pleasant day in September. The great purple cloud-belts lay stretched across the western sky, whose serene blue

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smiled us a welcome, as we drove through the wide park, darkened with its sentinel shade-trees, and Uncle Leonard's imposing *maison* rose, at last, to our eager eyes. They were all assembled to welcome us. Minnie stood there, with her hands clasped on her brother's shoulder, her sweet face shaded with the abundant ringlets of her golden hair, the soft, delicate lineaments lighted with eager expectation, as we approached. Cousin Harry was almost as handsome as Brother Fred, I thought, as my eyes traced the classic outline of his face, with the dark hair and darker eyes, while in Aunt Mary's sweet smile and gentle face I traced Minnie's features, matured and subdued. "Welcome, Cousin Kate!" and with her own wild grace Minnie sprang forward and threw her arms about me; and then I was folded very fondly to the hearts of all the others, and sweet content stole over mine, for it was *at home*.

In a little time the wanderers left us. There were sad tears, and murmured blessings, and last, clinging caresses, as the two young, earnest-hearted dreamers went forth to those far-off lands, rich only in their relics.

Bright, O, how exceedingly bright is the tide of sunlight in which my life-journey is lying now! Affection made my southern home all that it had promised. No daughter could have been cherished more fondly, no sister loved more ardently, than was I. The darkest shadow that stole over our way was anxiety for the distant dear ones; but love missives, penned amid their enthusiastic wanderings, came ever to disperse that. And so, bringing us their meed of flower, and song, and happiness, two years rolled swiftly away. And I thought such brightness could last! Ah me! what madness!

"Cousin Kate, do you know we are to have company?" said Minnie, bounding into my room, one May morning, while the breeze brought through the casement its tribute of fragrance, wheedled from the roses and jessamine blossoms that hung their drapery on the portico-pillars, or graced the broad *parterres* of the garden. "I surely was not aware that a fact so unprecedented in the annals of our very tame existence was about to occur," was my laughing reply, as I drew down the sweet, vivacious face to my lips. My caress was returned with abundant fondness, but with a gravity very unusual to her. Minnie continued, "But this, I assure you, Cousin Kate, is company *pas commun*, quite *extraordinaire*, indeed. You have heard mamma speak of a Mrs. Travers, some

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sixteenth cousin of hers, to whom, however, she was, in girlhood, attached by ties stronger than any woven by consanguinity. Well, this same lady has a son, Arthur Travers (I saw him when a boy, and a handsome one, too), who graduated at Yale, and then, like your silly brother and mine, spent several years in peregrinating some barbarous corner of creation, for the very laudable purpose of brushing dust and cobwebs from broken marble *reliques* a thousand times older than himself, and, meanwhile, tormenting his friends with anxiety for the safety of his *physique*. He has returned, however, *en sureté*, and, in compliance with a request of his mother, intends visiting us. But this is not all. A classmate and travelling companion of his, Ernest Irving, will accompany him. By some inexplicable casualty, the letter has been detained which states they will be here to-morrow; and so, Cousin Kate, between two such *beaux gentilhommes*," — and Minnie spoke with a ludicrously elongated visage, — "I suppose the doom of your heart and mine is irrevocably fixed!" Were her words prophetic?

The morrow came, and the young strangers came with it. We were presented to them at dinner. My first, half-stolen glance only revealed to me two young and *distingué* looking men, rather above the *mediocre* height; but I soon availed myself of every opportunity for a more leisurely survey. The contour of Arthur Travers' features was remarkably regular, and the smile that lighted up his fine, eloquent face, very fascinating. Possessing conversational powers of a high order, a sparkling and vivacious flow of *bel-esprit* always at command, with that ease and refinement of manners which education and intercourse with cultivated society can alone confer, Arthur Travers was in all respects a very charming companion. Ernest Irving was in every way unlike his friend. His features possessed the regularity of a woman's, while their boldness absolved them from all charge of effeminacy. The strong outlines of the high, white forehead, the deep chestnut-brown hair, and the dark eyes, whose hue I could never fix upon, for their very *inconstance*, rendered the countenance of Ernest Irving a singularly fine one. Lavater would have loved such an one, for Genius had laid its unmistakable autograph upon every lineament. There was more of repose in his manner, and less of sparkling vivacity in his conversation, than in his friend's; but I often found myself turning from the lively sallies of the one to the graceful eloquence

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of the other. There was a nameless charm in the voice of Ernest Irving, and an earnest, enthusiastic spontaneity in all that he said, that invariably infused itself into the hearts of his listeners; but there was no effort, in all this, — not the slightest seeking after effect; it was the mere outflow of a gifted spirit's burning thoughts and stirring emotions, and I listened with silent admiration and enjoyment.

"Well, Minnie, dearie, to which of our guests do you grant the precedence, in all that is *agrément?*" I asked of my cousin, at a late hour that evening, as we found ourselves alone. "They are both very *charmant*, but — no matter," added Minnie, with one of her arch smiles, "I am not going to give you, Cousin Kate, a peep into my *affaires du cœur.*" I, however, was tolerably well satisfied as to where Minnie bestowed her preference, and for the first time I was glad that our opinions did not coincide.

* * * * * * *

Memory's white fingers roll back the curtain from the next six weeks, and a scene rises before me, bright, O, how dazzlingly bright! An island, fair as the dream-bowers of Peristan, baptized in sunshine, with fragrant blossoms for its carpet, and the heart's own faint, exquisite music ever floating through its atmosphere, rose out of life's ocean, and beside its fair banks I moored my bark, and wandered through its Eden-groves in dreamy bliss. But a cloud rode over its skies; I sought my bark, and saw the bright island, with its fragrant blossoms and haunting music, sink into the ocean, and the cold life-waves rolled over it forever.

We rode, we visited, we walked and sang, with our guests. We laughed at Arthur Travers' piquant repartees, and listened to Ernest's brilliant conversation; and Minnie's laugh grew less wild, and her brow wore a subdued and quieter beauty. Poor Minnie! Was her playful prophecy being verified? And how was it with me?

"Cousin Kate!" It is a sweet, musical appellation. Do you not think so, dear reader? But it never sounded half so musical as when it reached my ear in the deep, rich voice of Ernest Irving, accompanied, sometimes, with a glance from those fine eyes that would quicken heart and pulse with electrical suddenness, while I tried to teach myself it had no import; and yet, when alone, I would bury my face in my hands, to shut out all extraneous things, and muse for hours upon the story those

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glances revealed. And the smile that sometimes lighted up those grave but perfect features! Why was it that the sunshine would lay with a strange, tremulous brightness about my way for hours after I had received one of those smiles? But my heart is asking a truce to all this. The flood of dazzling recollections that rushes over it, with the return of that brightest season of my life, is all too powerful. The curtain must drop.

Again and again had our guests specified the time for their departure, and as often, at the urgent solicitations of the heads of the household, seconded by our less positive but not less sincere requests, had that time been referred to a more remote period. But letters came from Mrs. Travers, entreating Arthur's return to his Georgia home, for her mother's heart yearned to look upon its idol once more; and Ernest told us of the fond parents, among the green savannas of Louisiana, who almost out-watched the stars in awaiting his return; and at length the time of their departure was irrevocably fixed.

The night-spirits were muffling the earth in their curtain-shadows, as we stood on the portico, the night previous to the departure of our guests. We were all very silent, and two of us, I know, felt very sad, as the stars crept into the June-night sky. A last walk was proposed by the young men, to which Minnie and I assented.

We followed a kind of labyrinthine path, leading out of the park, where it branched off in two directions, one conducting to a grove of silver-trees, the other to a luxuriant arbor, under some fine old oaks. I had not observed that Arthur and Minnie had taken the latter path until we drew near the silver-trees. It was a bright, still night. The rising moon laid its crown of silver-gray on the lightly-heaving tree-crests, the broad, colossal shadows lay unstirred beneath us, while a few light clouds lay, like white, drooping pennons, upon the sky-field above. The loudest noise, that evening, was the sound of our footfalls, as we drew under the shadow of the silver-trees; and, as we paused there, no voice to break the stillness, I was conscious that those dark, piercing eyes were gazing on me, and I felt that it was with the look which they had sometimes worn when he had spoken my name, and the knowledge of this was enough to preclude all possibility of my speaking. And so we stood, for a little time, with my eyes searching the shadows, and his perusing my face; and then Ernest Irving drew the hand which lay lightly on his arm within

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his own, and murmured, "Cousin Kate, I love you!" It was said as no other man would have said it, with that earnest abruptness peculiar to himself; but never came words from human lips whose tones breathed more of intense heart-fervor and affection than did those. No promises, no vows, no language, could have carried to my soul a stronger conviction of their truth, than did the voice in which they were uttered. It was the soul's own language, — it infused new force into mine. There was no trembling, no trepidation of heart or lip, as I lifted my eyes to Ernest Irving's, and met that strong, deep glance; and no faltering of my voice, as I answered, low and distinct, "And I, Ernest Irving, love you!"

And then I was drawn very closely to the heart whose quickened pulses I could feel, and there, with the silver trees lying between us and that night-sky, with its star-host lying between the trees and the heaven where his words were registered, did Ernest Irving pledge himself to be faithful forever to the heart which I had given him, and, in the strength of the great love which he bore me, to go forth for a while, but to return and make me his own forever. And when, in a voice so low that the birds in the tree-boughs above us could not have been awakened, I gave him my troth, I know that the angel recorders never bore to the life-records on high words that will bear, in the light of eternity, stronger evidence of their truth than did mine. It was late, very late, when Ernest and I returned to the park path again, but we found Arthur and Minnie just entering it. We were all silent, but one heart, at least, was not sad; and there was a light in Minnie's blue eyes that night, when she kissed me at parting, which told me enough.

The next day our guests departed. Sweet Minnie! The bright lip quivered, and the young brow wore the heaviest shadow which had ever visited it, after this. And my own heart was very heavy for a time; but we thought on the many missives which had been so fondly promised us, and the shadows and the heart-heaviness passed away. Minnie and I did not orally confide to each other our heart-secrets, for they seemed all too sacred for mortal lips, and, with a mutual delicacy, we both shrank from making any disclosures; but each knew the heart-story of the other, and, if possible, we were drawn closer to each other.

They came very soon, those eagerly-awaited letters, breathing only sweet, affectionate words, and full of high hopes, filling the future with

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pictures, all bright and golden in love and fancy's hues; and we gathered those pictures into our hearts, and hung them over its very "hearth-stones."

Time wore pleasantly onward, and brought us other letters (and very dear ones, too), from the wanderers in fairer climes; and Fred told me of the fair and high-born English girl, yet very gentle and lovely withal, with whom he was travelling; and Harry wrote to Minnie of the dark-eyed Italian, whose beauty rivalled all that was wondrous in painting or statuary; and we began to conjecture that new sisters might, ere long, be claimants for the love we were ready to bestow.

Summer and autumn time, and the light southern winter, went down to their graves among their sister-seasons in the past, and the *magians* who had stolen into our soul's inner sanctuaries were very faithful in their remembrances, while each of Ernest's letters grew fonder and wilder in its dreams and hopes than the last.

"No matter, you will have one to-morrow!" So said my sweet cousin, one spring evening, after we had sauntered down the lane in order to meet the post-boy, who handed her a letter, saying there was none for the other lady.

I saw that my disappointment was saddening Minnie's enjoyment of her letter, and so I smiled and said, "Yes, I shall have one to-morrow;" but, somehow, my heart was very sad all that evening. But the morrow came and brought with it no letter, and Minnie redoubled her prophecy of the next day's inevitably bringing it, — but it did not; and then she puzzled her *cerveau* in discovering causes for the delay, and I listened and assented, and tried to think that I was too *exigeant*. But night after night my eyes grew dim with watchings for the post-boy, who came not for me; and then I turned to the old letters, and fed my heart a while with their cherished contents, and Minnie was more watchful and kinder than ever; but, when another week rolled on, and brought, at its appointed time, another letter for herself, and none for me, she had no heart to open it.

"Minnie, your cousin is growing thin, — she certainly does not look well," said Aunt Mary to her daughter, as we sat at breakfast, one morning, after her eyes had been earnestly perusing my countenance for some time. "You do not take sufficient exercise," she continued, shaking

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her head in a very unconvinced manner, in reply to my eager assurance that I was quite well. "Minnie, you are a very tolerable *equestrienne*, and your cousin is certainly not your inferior. Go you both into the woods to-day, — I must not see the roses paling on your cheeks, my sweet niece." We donned our riding-gear that morning, mounted our steeds, and started for the woods, through which we had often galloped in girlish gladheartedness, listening to the echo of our own wild voices. But the earth and sky were like the face of an estranged friend. All was darkness to me. We rode a long time in silence, and then Minnie drew close to my side, and looked up earnestly in my face. I know not what story she read there, but she immediately said, "Kate, we will go no further;" and we wheeled around, and our horses were pressing homewards. Minnie flung her arms tightly around me, and wept long and unrestrainedly, when we reached home; but my heart had no tears to give. Could Ernest Irving be false to me? How indignantly my heart repudiated the thought, the first time it presented itself! But, of late, it had been seething and burning in my soul, that one solitary, terrible thought! And always, to controvert it, did I call up those words, — not the words, either, but the voice that said, under the silver-trees, "Cousin Kate, I love you!" and the echo left by that voice in my soul was still mighty in keeping there convictions of its truth. But suspense, at last, grew too agonizing for endurance. I wrote to Ernest. I did not tell him all I had suffered, — *that* would have been impossible; but I entreated him, by the memory of the love he once professed to bear me, by the truth of his vows of unfailing constancy, to relieve my suspense, — to unveil the mystery of his silence. And then I awaited the answer. O, how prayerfully; how eagerly! *But none came.*

The summer days were fair as their predecessors had been; but the park, the groves and the woods around my uncle's *maison*, were all silent; for the voices which had filled them with merry sounds, and the girlish forms which had flitted among the shrubbery, knew them no more. I could not visit them, and Minnie would not leave my side for a moment. Her kindness was unremitting. Alas! little could kindness avail then; for *Despair* was folding its cold black pinions about my spirit.

Uncle Leonard and Aunt Mary looked very grave, and sent for the

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physician; and I heard my aunt say, in a broken voice, something of "inheriting the delicate constitution of her mother;" and *le bon medécin* looked very wise as he fingered my pulse, and murmured somewhat about "predisposition to pulmonary disease, perfect quiet, and infallible prescriptions." I was greatly relieved to perceive how entirely absolved from a suspicion of the true state of things were all of their minds.

"Cousin Kate, rejoice with me, for I bring you good tidings!" said Minnie, bounding into my room, one afternoon, her face lighted with smiles such as it had not worn for weeks, while she held an open letter before me. I was reclining upon a lounge, my head reposing among its luxuriant cushions, while my heart was battling fiercely with the flood that, rushing over it, was desolating all its pleasant places, while the indolent sunshine, from which I had tightly closed my eyes, lay in mocking brightness about me.

My heart jumped to Minnie's eager voice, as I rose up, with lips whose quivering alone demanded an explanation. "Why, Arthur writes he shall be here next week, and then, I am certain, he will be able to elucidate all that is now inexplicable to us; so, smile once again, as of old, darling," said my cousin, placing her arm about my waist. I read Minnie's meaning, and the despair-tide was stayed, and the bowed sisterhood of hope-blossoms lifted themselves along their heart-paths once more. Arthur Travers would surely bring some tidings of Ernest, although his late letters had contained no information of him, except an occasional remark, semi-jesting, semi-scolding, respecting his default in their correspondence; but I thought on the singularly strong friendship which had existed between the young men, and felt certain that Arthur would bring me some information, and anything I thought would be better than the suspense which was wearing away my life.

Uncle Leonard's deep voice blessed me, and Aunt Mary's praised the doctor's *remèdes*, and new light sprang to Minnie's blue eyes; for I was looking better.

The next week came, and with it, true to his promise, came Arthur Travers. My heart felt a quick pang, as he folded Minnie to his own, for I thought of one who — no matter! With all his graceful self-possession, Arthur Travers could not restrain a start at the change in my appearance, when he turned, with a warm greeting, from Minnie to my-

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self; but she assured him that I was rapidly recovering, and we passed to other subjects. I talked very rapidly, for a new, strange dread of hearing him pronounce Ernest's name had come over me. I apprehended I knew not what; but I filled up every pause in the conversation, and I believe Minnie participated in this feeling.

We were chatting over our last "dinner course," when Aunt Mary suddenly inquired, "But what has become of your friend, Mr. Irving?" My heart stood still. "O, I had forgotten what a surprise I have in store for you," was the reply. "I came upon Ernest very suddenly, last week, in Cincinnati. He was among what I thought had very much the appearance of a bridal party, but I was in no wise prepared for the *dénoument*. He introduced me to the fair, delicate-looking creature hanging on his arm, as *his bride*. I fear surprise prevented my congratulations being very cordial, for he received them quite coldly. I had little opportunity for conversation, which, I thought, he did not regret. In fact, his default in our correspondence, and his conduct at our meeting, convinced me that an inexplicable change has come over the friend upon whose constancy I would once have pledged my life;" and a shadow passed over the fine features of Arthur Travers. "If this change is attributable to that exclusiveness which is said to be the prerogative of every new affection," he continued, after a pause, in a lighter tone, "I should certainly dread the influence of the 'noose matrimonial' upon myself;" and he glanced, with arch significance, at Minnie. But no answering blush stole to the fair cheek of my cousin, for she was gazing too intently at me to observe either the tones or the glance of the speaker. I was outwardly calm,—and inwardly, too, for that matter, for the blow had fallen with such stunning, paralyzing effect, that thought and emotion had nearly deserted me. I remember, as we rose from the table, requesting permission to retire, pleading indisposition as my reason for so doing, which statement was entirely corroborated by my appearance. I reached my room, I never knew how; but Minnie, coming in a moment after, found me senseless upon the floor.

There is a long, dark blank, after this. For nearly two weeks a raging brain-fever kept me entirely unconscious even of the friends who wept around my couch. But one day, after the fever reached its crisis, I slept, and, to the extreme astonishment and joy of my relatives, I

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awoke with a fair chance of recovery; but I was not allowed to speak, and so exhausted was I by the fever, that it was several days before I could realize what had induced it. I remember, it was the day after the seal had been taken from my lips, and Uncle Leonard, Aunt Mary and Arthur, had been to my room, and, in tones that attested the sincerity of their words, congratulated me upon my recovery, and I had smiled a faint reply, and inwardly wondered what I had to do with the world, it had grown so dark and strange to me, when Minnie, having contrived to banish every individual from the room, induced me to walk, with her aid, to an easy-chair, which she had placed by the casement. It was twilight, and the newly-awakened breeze, from the distant mountain-tops, came, with gentle, grateful kisses, to my forehead; and I laid my head upon Minnie's shoulder, and wept, long and unrestrainedly, soft, sweet tears, that cooled the scorching of my heart; and then, while the golden folds of the cloud-land sank slowly away, and the stars broke into the blue, Minnie and I laid our hearts very bare to each other. She told me of my wild delirium, and how, night and day, she had watched by me (and her pale cheek bore witness to her words), fearful lest something might escape me, in my ravings; and how I would ever grow calm at her voice, and though I had often breathed Ernest's name, and called upon him sometimes very wildly, still, as we had been conversing of him just previous to my attack, it had induced no suspicions. How I blessed the sweet girl for her watchfulness! And then we talked of the dark mystery in which Ernest's conduct was involved, and I told her of the words spoken under the silver-trees; and her brow flushed with indignation, and she spoke very bitterly of him, for the vows he had broken and the wrong he had done me; but I placed a hand, so thin and emaciated that it startled even me, on her lips. Even then, I could not bear that she should blame him.

After this, my recovery was slow, but certain. I did not pine away and die, as forsaken heroines always do in novels; and permit me to assure you, reader, that she who does so is always a weak woman. No matter how mighty are the fibres which have been torn from the heart, into whose very life they seemed woven; no matter how deep may be the grave which you have made amid the throbbing, aching soil of your own heart, trampling and crushing down the sweet flowers which affec-

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tion's light had quickened into life; no matter how pleasant was the gush of the fountain upon whose lip you have placed the seal forever, — still, with life's great, earnest work, its lofty aims and blessed rewards, before you, if, with all these urging you to the grand work of the future, you yield to the stroke, you are foolishly, sinfully weak. Instances there may be where predisposition to disease, or real physical infirmity, may have been enhanced by grief, and proved fatal; but these are only the exceptions. I did not "pine away and die," but I suffered. Man or woman, who may be reading these pages, and who hast loved once truly and well, and then passed through the darkness and desolateness of separation, whether this was partly your fault or all another's, I ask you, by the memory of the first paralyzing blow, by the fierce after-conflicts, by the sudden pang, when you deemed all feeling had been conquered and subdued, awakened by some sudden thing, — it might be a tone, or word, the summer wind, perchance, breathing among the trees with its by-gone music, or the moonbeams stealing through interlacing boughs, — by the memory of all and of each of these, I ask you, Is not this suffering a fearful thing? But my heart is growing very faint again, with its memories. The curtain must drop.

There were warm welcomes from all the household, from friends and acquaintances, when I rejoined their festive circle, and stood in the places which had known me before. Aunt Mary said that the listlessness and apathy with which I looked upon everything would vanish with restored health. Alas! I knew otherwise. Arthur, Minnie and I, wandered to the old haunts; but for me they had lost all their brightness. I could turn to no oasis, in the great life-desert around me.

But at last light broke upon my way, — a new, living light, that was not of this world, but its darkness all vanished before it.

It was sunset, and about six weeks subsequent to the time when I first awoke from that terrible fever. Arthur and Minnie were taking a long ride (the former was to leave next day), and I had declined accompanying them, either from inability or absence of inclination. I had stolen away from Aunt Mary, and, while the sunset flooded the room with its farewell radiance, I sat there, unmindful of the gorgeous cloud-drapery, my heart filled with haunting and sickening memories. Suddenly my eyes rested upon the golden clasps of my mother's Bible, which lay on

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the table by my side. I recalled its precious promises; I remembered that to the weary it promised rest, strength to the weak, and balm to the broken-hearted; and I opened its blessed pages, and turned to its gracious promises, and read until the night-shadows gathered heavy about me: but, when Aunt Mary came to me, with gentle chidings for leaving her so long, my heart had found a new trust upon which to stay itself, and somewhat of the darkness that enshrouded my spirit had vanished. And so, day after day, I turned to those promises, and the trust grew stronger, and the darkness less dense; and though there were many dark hours, and much of weariness and weakness, still the light and the trust did not forsake me, and at last the earthly idol which had so long claimed my heart-worship gave place to that love in which "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and I felt that He who had given and taken from me the love of Ernest Irving had done all things well.

"Thy will be done!" Did you ever feel all that is embraced in that ejaculation, reader? "Thy will be done!" The little child says it, when the light fades from the earth, with his hands clasped on his mother's knee, and the smile half fading from his lips in the solemnity of the moment; and the angels bend very low, to catch the sweet tones as they rise upward. The maiden says it, while the shadow of her silken tresses trembles upon the gilded leaves of her prayer-book, and hopes, rosy and bright as the lips that breathe those words, lie trembling about her heart, while the light falls dim and chastened upon the frescoed walls of the sanctuary. The gray-haired man utters it when the hopes of his youth are all vanished, and others speak it in all the pride and strength of manhood; but how few, of all these, wot of what is embodied in those words! "Thy will be done!" The Saviour of mankind said it; but *how?* The night wind rustled softly among the dark olive-tops of Gethsemane, and the stars looked down from the blue folds of the night-skies, when, amid tears such as shall never flood mortal eyes again, and amid struggles compared to which the fiercest death-throes are the sweet breathings of infancy, did He who was mightier than all men send up to the throne of his Father that submissive prayer; and never, rolling to the very architraves of heaven, and pealing over its hills of jasper from the quivering chords of the highest archangel's harp, hath a sublimer strain reached the throne of the eternal God than that human

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prayer,— "Thy will be done!" Thank God, I learned, at last, to say it! The world was no longer a desert; the sunshine lay pleasantly about it again, and when smiles came back to my lips, they were all very glad; but when I told Minnie of the change which had effected all this, she, too, sought and obtained "the peace which passeth understanding."

Another southern winter wore away, and with the spring came glad tidings from the unforgotten wanderers; — tidings of new ties about to be woven, and then of their immediate return. They came, at last, with brows somewhat darkened by southern suns, but vastly matured in mind and person. O! it was very sweet to be folded to Fred's heart again, and told that we should never part more; and to look upon his blushing girl-bride, fair and fragile as the bridal orange-blossoms that trembled in her hair. We found that Harry's enthusiastic descriptions of his night-haired love hardly exceeded the truth, so great was her wondrous beauty. Fred told my sweet sister Louise that we should return to our New England home. How my heart bounded at the thought! But we lingered a while. Arthur was to come, for so had Minnie's parents promised him, that when Harry brought his bride to gladden their home, Minnie should go forth to his. Many years before, this union had been contemplated by Arthur's mother and Minnie's, and it is possible that Aunt Mary would have been more alive to Ernest's partiality for me, had she not been absorbed in watching the success of her harmless schemes. Arthur was rendered equally obtuse by his own *affaires du cœur*. Arthur and his mother came, soon after our brothers' return, and Minnie looked very beautiful in her bridal robes, and very true in its love was the heart which she gave to Arthur Travers. I was her bridesmaid.

There were sad scenes after this. Many tears were shed when Minnie went forth from the home of her childhood, and many more when Fred took his bride and his sister from that fair southern home; and my heart was very sad at leaving it.

It was summer twilight when our cottage first gleamed upon my gaze, through its misty veil of green. There was a sweet, sudden rain of tears then; for all its hallowed associations, and all which had transpired since last I saw it, came crowding thick upon me; but when I passed over its threshold, and wandered over its rooms, I felt that in all the wide world *that* alone could be entirely home to me.

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Sweet Sister Louise wept with me over our mother's grave; and we all wandered to the old time-hallowed haunts, and settled down, with somewhat of the child-happiness, in our cottage-home.

Three years rolled pleasantly away. A dark-eyed boy, very like Fred, had come to gladden our household. Arthur brought his Minnie, and Harry his beautiful and gentle Enrica, to us, every summer. They were with us then, and we were all chatting gleefully together, one morning, in the dear old sitting-room, when a servant brought me information that *a person* requested to see me privately, and declined giving his name. Wondering greatly what his errand could be, I repaired to the parlor, and found there a very ordinary-looking personage, who rose, on my entrance, and presented me with a small packet, informing me that his mistress, recently deceased, had, on her dying bed, bound him, by a solemn pledge, to deliver the packet into my hands. He stated that he had experienced considerable difficulty in finding me, having misapprehended my place of residence. I saw it was directed to Virginia. "And what was the name of your mistress?" I inquired, as soon as my surprise would permit my doing so. "Claybourne, ma'am, and she resided near A——, in Louisiana." I grasped the chair for support. It was the home of Ernest Irving, and the lady a cousin of his mother's. I had often heard him speak of her. I believe I asked the man to remain and take some refreshment; but he must have declined this, for, a moment after, I was standing alone, with that strange packet grasped convulsively in my fingers. I had just consciousness sufficient to mount to my own apartment, sending word to the sitting-room that I should be engaged for an hour or two. After several attempts, rendered ineffectual by the trembling of my hands, I succeeded in unfolding the packet, and several letters, directed to me, in the well-remembered handwriting of Ernest Irving, rolled out. There was another, in a lady's hand, bearing these words upon the envelope, "Read this first." Many times, with uneven footsteps, and a hand pressed to my throbbing forehead, did I pace up and down my room, striving to gain strength to open *that;* for I felt that some fearful disclosures were about to be unfolded to me. At last I succeeded, and, with my heart growing colder at every word, I read:

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"MADAME: — Upon the borders of the eternal world, with the death-damps upon my forehead, and the life-light fast fading from my eyes, do I arouse myself to address one whom I have deeply and irreparably wronged. But waning strength warns me to hasten, and you will read in my confession the terrible remorse which alone could have urged me to make it. I am the mother of Ernest Irving's wife, and a cousin of his mother. Left, by the death of my husband, a dependant upon the bounty of the latter (we had ever been as sisters), Ernest and my daughter grew up beneath the same roof, and it became the earnest wish of both parents that a union should, at a future period, be consummated by our children. Although Ernest had never manifested other than a brother's affection for my daughter when he left home for college, and evinced nothing more when he returned, to make preparations for several years' absence, passed in eastern travels, the ardor of our hopes was by no means abated. But when Ernest at last returned, and his mother gently hinted her wishes, he firmly avowed that this union could never take place, as his affections were already in the possession of a lady at the north. I cannot describe to you my rage, on hearing this, nor the hatred, which, until then, I had not imagined it possible for me to entertain, which took possession of me. I knew my daughter had bestowed her affections upon Ernest; but maternal solicitude was not all which actuated me. I could not endure the thought that the immense possessions to which Ernest was heir should become another's; for I was proud, even in my dependence. At length, by a long chain of sophistical reasoning, I persuaded myself that I should commit no wrong in intercepting your letters. *I did so, for some time;* but Ernest continued to write, and at length I began to fear the failure and discovery of my machinations. Involved in the meshes of my own iniquitous schemes, and led on by the commission of one crime into another, still darker, I at last conceived the idea of counterfeiting your hand, and writing him. I did not read your letters, or his own, for I feared they might cause me to relent; but your direction furnished me with a model, and as I had always been peculiarly skilful in perpetrating *fac similes*, I had no difficulty in this matter. I wrote him a *decided refusal*, alleging no reasons for my conduct, but emphatically forbidding an answer. The letter was mailed near your residence, and compassed my ends. In less than a

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month's time from its reception, Ernest and my daughter were united. But with the consummation of my plans came that remorse which has sapped the springs of my life, and its last moments will be passed in making all the reparation which is in my power. No mortal but yourself will be possessed of the secret. Ernest Irving may not give to my daughter the love which was yours, but I believe that he is happy with her and their child. I could not feel that duty demanded that I should forever blight their happiness by a disclosure of the truth. I dare not ask of you that forgiveness which I hope, through sincere repentance of my great sin, God has granted me; and yet, lady, you can never dream the bliss which the assurance of your pardon would, in this dying hour, grant to the soul of ELIZA CLAYBOURNE."

I read this entire letter, reader, though the last lines were rendered hardly legible by the failing strength of the writer; and then I sat down and covered my face very tightly with both hands, conscious of but one thought, and all others were lost in that, — Ernest Irving had been true to the vows he had spoken under the silver-trees, and I knew that he had loved me as man never but once loves woman. A long time after this, Minnie came in, and found me still sitting there, my face buried in my hands. A startled exclamation burst from her lips as I turned my countenance towards her, but I silently pointed to the letter. She read it; and the ghastly pallor of the face she lifted to me could hardly have been exceeded by my own.

There was a long, slow fever after this, not dangerous, but very enervating; and, as I lay on my couch, and they sometimes left me alone, at my earnest solicitation, I had nothing to do but to commune with my own heart, and be still. But O, it was no light thing to school that heart into feeling that I must ever seem false to Ernest Irving; and yet God forbid that aught of the truth should ever reach him, that his hearthstone should be forever darkened by a knowledge of the terrible deception of which we both had been the victims! When the secrets of all hearts were laid bare, he would know I had been true to the great love which I bore him.

Not until I had entirely recovered did I trust myself to peruse Ernest's letters. There were the first loving, hopeful ones, so like himself; and

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then they grew sad as they told of eager watchings for the response, which did not come. And I could tell when the first doubt-chill began to creep over them; and then the wild appeals of the proud but tortured heart to my affection, and the strong trust in my constancy, and the stronger love that would not permit him to give up his hope. Many times was I obliged to pause in reading these, and every letter which I laid down was very wet with blinding heart-tears; but that night I laid them all in the flames, for I felt with them before me it would be very hard to grant the dying woman's prayer for my pardon; and then there was a little struggle before I could pray very fervently that all of earth's blessings might cluster around the hearth of Ernest Irving, and that God would grant him real heart-happiness in the love of his young wife, and the child He had given them.

Another year passed away, and another "sweet claimant of love," a fair-haired little girl, had come to our household. But sweet Sister Louise's health declined daily, so last winter was passed by all of us in Minnie's fair Georgia home; but the soft spring-time brought no hue of returning health to Louise's cheek, and she passed away with the June roses, as gentle and lovely as they, and in her last life-hour I promised her I would supply her place to the children she left behind. O! it was terrible to witness the agony of the strong man, terrible to bear the pangs of my own bereaved heart; for Louise had become very dear to me; — but I know she is with mother in heaven.

Circumstances made it imperatively necessary that I should precede Fred and the children in their return to our New England home; but before I left Minnie, a few weeks since, I gave her full permission to unfold to Fred all the circumstances of my past life with which she was acquainted. I felt this was but justice to both of us; for Fred would otherwise never consent to my devoting myself to the children, as I fully intended to do. He had often rallied me upon my indifference to the attentions of some of our guests, but I had a weapon with which to parry all his remarks; and though I knew that Louise, with a woman's intuitive penetration, felt that some cause existed for all this, she never, by word or look, betrayed her suspicions.

And so Memory has brought me through the light and darkness of the past, back to the dreamy light, the dancing fire, and the easy-chair in

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my own room. It is the last night I shall be alone; for Fred, with his motherless children, will be here to-morrow, and in very truth shall I be a mother to them; for Fred will never take another to his heart, for *that* is in the grave with his Louise. The music and the mirth of infancy will fill the rooms, and make the old places glad again; and I shall go into the future trusting in His strength, whose everlasting arms will be about me for ever and for aye.

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WEARY-HEARTED.

BY WINNIE WOODFERN.

Upon the mossy hill,
And by the sparkling rill,
Whose waters seek the far-off ocean strand,
I lie, at length, once more;
My heart thrills to its core,
Again to linger in its fairy land.

O land, O peaceful land,
Where childhood's pleasures bland
Mingled with dreams of sweeter days to come!
Where are thy deep blue skies,
And the familiar eyes,
That looked from them as from their spirit home?

The evening air is still,
And from the far-off hill
The herds, like moving shadows, homeward glide;
Alas! in other days
I tried those pleasant ways,
Behind the flock, with playmates at my side.

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With curls of sunny light,
And eyes as day-stars bright,
Those playmates vanished from my paths away;
But thou, O peaceful land,
Surely thy gentle hand
Can bring them hither once again to-day!

Greet they my steps no more?
O, to what silent shore
Have those bright faces, those fleet footsteps, fled?
They were too pure and fair
To know one touch of care,
Too beautiful to join the mouldering dead!

Yet is their green home changed,
Yet are they all estranged
From the lone wanderer who lingers here!
The sky above the hill
Bends in its beauty still;
They love no longer, though they still are dear!

In strange wild lands I 've stood,
I have made evil good,
And good as evil, to my woman's heart;
I have seen Hope and Faith
Dying a lingering death,
And, tearless, watched life's loveliness depart.

I have been desolate,
And with a stern, dark fate
Have striven till my weary soul gave way;
Yet, through my good or ill,
My heart, unchanging still,
Has turned in fondness to its earlier day,

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And whispered, Weep no more!
Thy trials have been sore,
Yet through thy weakness shall thy strength be given;
Look with the eye of Faith
Beyond the gates of Death,
And thou shalt see thy home, — thy rest, — thy Heaven!

I linger on the shore
Of life (*my* life no more),
And with faint heart essay to cross the stream;
Yet, even in this hour,
I feel the startling power
Thrown round my soul by girlhood's earliest dream.

In sorrow, sickness, pain,
I come, I come again,
Unto my childhood's pleasant fairy land;
I hear no welcoming voice,
No gentle hearts rejoice,
No friend is near to clasp my trembling hand.

Only the deep blue sky
Looks with a saddened eye
To see my tears, my anguish, my despair;
Only the murmuring rill,
With tones all soft and still,
Shapes to these words the balmy evening air.

Behold, the end is come!
What is an earthly home,
Or earthly friends, however dear they be,
To one whose closing eyes
Will wake in Paradise,
Ere the next sunset gilds the distant sea?

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Faint-hearted! weep no more!
Thy trials have been sore,
Yet through thy weakness shall thy strength be given;
Look with the eye of Faith
Beyond the gates of Death,
And thou shalt see thy home, — thy rest, — thy Heaven!

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ON A PICTURE OF LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD.

BY "NILLA."

THE memories of my childhood years, — I call them back at will;
The scenes of yesterday depart, but they are with me still;
They charm me with their pleasant spell, and bid me live once more,
Not in the life of womanhood, but in the life of yore!

Again I feel my mother's arms enfold me to her heart;
Again the music of her voice bids every grief depart;
I feel her kiss upon my cheek, and smile as then I smiled,
And in those childhood memories I am once more a child.

I listen to the witching tales, the stories that she told,
So strange, so thrilling, and so wild, my eyes with wonder rolled;
Remembering well the curdling awe that well-nigh froze my blood,
When listening to the woful fate of Little Riding-hood.

That child, so beautiful and kind, who started out one day
With good things for her grandmamma, but loitered on her way;
And, while the crafty wolf ran on, the little maiden stood,
And plucked the prettiest flowers that grew, — the posies of the wood!

And thus too late she reached the door; for, ere the maiden came,
The hungry wolf had entered in, and had devoured the dame!
Ah me! and, sadder, sadder far, I feel the child's surprise,
To find such ears, and nose, and mouth, and, O, such fearful eyes!

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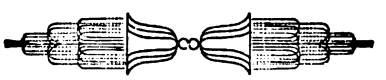
And, even at this present hour, while gazing on this page,
I feel again my child-heart beat, as at that early age;
For thus the little maid was dressed, her red cloak wrapped around;
And thus she rested by the door, her basket on the ground;
With sparkling eyes and eager hand, intent, with child-like care,
Ere yet she raised the latch, to tell the good dame she was there.

Thanks, faithful semblance, for the thoughts, the memories, you recall!
For o'er life's seasons childhood reigns, the sunniest time of all;
And every tone that brings it back takes from life's present care,
Blessing my spirit with a dew refreshing as a prayer!



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"SLEEP, LOVE!"

BY H. S. CORNWELL.

Sleep, love, folded in my arms!
I will shield thee from all harms.
As thou floatest down the stream
Of some love-enchanted dream,
While the rosy languor lies
On thy slumber-veiled eyes,
Sleep, love!

Softly sigh, O summer wind!
Through her dark locks, unconfined;
Do not stir a fragrant tress
Of this fair head's loveliness.
Whisper in her dream, and tell
That I love her wildly well!
Sleep, love!

Rest! while these fond arms entwine
Youth and beauty such as thine;
Sleep! and let thy pillow be
This true heart that beats for thee.
Know that him thou lovest best
Holds thee to his beating breast!
Sleep, love!

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LIFE'S SHADOWS.

BY SYBIL HASTINGS.

"Now, in thy youth, beseech of him
Who giveth, upbraiding not,
That his light in thy heart become not dim,
And his love be unforgot;
And thy God, in the darkest of days, will be
Greenness, and beauty, and strength, to thee."

BERNARD BARTON.

In a small, rustic village in New England, containing but few inhabitants, there stands a white cottage, half concealed by the tall maple-trees surrounding it, and somewhat remote from all other habitations.

A branch of the Connecticut river flows directly in front, and a smooth, green lawn sweeps to the road, which the stream borders, and rose-bushes cluster around the walls. It is the last house in the village; and nearly half a mile beyond is the "great house," as the handsome stone residence on the brow of the hill, at the left, is called by the inhabitants of Deerville. For a long time Maple Cottage stood empty, its former occupants having moved away. But, at length, early one spring, it was taken by Mrs. Aubrey, a widow, with two children, both daughters. The eldest was seventeen, the other a mere child, when they appeared in Deerville. They had formerly resided, while in affluent circumstances, in the city of Boston; but a series of pecuniary losses and misfortunes had reduced them to comparative poverty in a very short space of time. Utterly unable to bear with fortitude so sudden a reverse of fortune, Mr. Aubrey had drooped and died; but it was the grief of parting with the worshipped husband and parent that bowed his family in grief, and not the loss of their accustomed luxuries. After the purchase of Maple Cottage, and the expenditure of a small sum in making it a comfortable

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home, they found that the remainder of their income would barely suffice for their support, leaving no surplus for the many comparatively trifling luxuries which the past expensive habits and delicate health of Mrs. Aubrey rendered necessary to her comfort. Various plans had been devised by Ellen, the eldest daughter; but all had proved futile, with the exception of a situation as teacher in the village school, which had been for several weeks vacant. The knowledge of this fact had come to her ear but the evening previous to the opening of our story. All night she had been thinking of it, and endeavoring to devise some means by which she could gain courage to broach the subject to her mother, and present herself as a candidate for the vacancy.

Her heart throbbed fast at the thought of appearing, young, friendless and unknown, before the committee who were to examine her; but the same firmness which had borne her through the trials of the preceding months, from the hour when she had been summoned from the sunshine of prosperity to wrestle with the clouds of adversity, rose up to silence the voice which would have tempted her to weakness; and her pale cheek alone spoke of the night's conflict, when she joined her mother and May at the breakfast-table. It was a clear, spring morning, the sun was shining brightly through the white folds of muslin veiling the low casements, and filling the small but exquisitely neat apartment — alike parlor and dining-room — with light and warmth.

A handsome piano stood in a recess between the two windows opening on the lawn, and a large, softly-cushioned arm-chair in the embrasure of the south window. Vases and books were scattered tastefully around; but the remainder of the furniture was very simple. The piano had been a birth-day gift from Mr. Aubrey to Ellen; its keys had so often been struck in the glad hours of prosperity, that they could not bring themselves to part with it, for still its music might mingle with her voice, to cheer them in their loneliness. The arm-chair was hallowed to them by the memory of the father who had occupied it in their old home.

The three lonely ones clustering around the breakfast-table were dressed in deep mourning, and the shadow of bereavement lay dark on the wife's pallid face. Sorrow and care were also traced on the fair features of Ellen Aubrey, a fragile, girlish creature, with a low, musical voice, and a smile such as we picture on the features of God's angels in

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heaven; but the soft, serious eyes were full of beautiful faith and courage; and you could see the girl's innermost spirit, as it were, looking out from their clear depths. Close by her side, feeding a large, intelligent dog from her white hand, was May Churchill Aubrey, the wild, wayward, but beautiful and loving creature, whom they both made their idol.

Once or twice during breakfast Ellen strove to allude to the subject engrossing all her thoughts; but Mrs. Aubrey would just then interrupt her with a more cheerful word, or May would laugh her soft, low laugh, and she could not endure to mar their unwonted cheerfulness. But when Mrs. Aubrey arose, she laid her hand upon her arm to detain her, and spoke in rapid, eager tones. The mother turned a faint, incredulous smile upon her graceful, girlish child, and shook her head discouragingly.

But Ellen Aubrey knew far better than her parent how much they stood in need of aid, and she pleaded so eagerly and lovingly with Mrs. Aubrey that the latter could not resist.

"You have not strength, Ellen, my frail one," said the mother, with a troubled glance, as she looked on her delicate child. But the girl answered, "God will strengthen me, my mother, to care for you!" and her eyes were full of that beautiful faith and hope which was ever shining there when her spirit was moved. So it was decided that, on the morrow, Ellen Aubrey, the tenderly-nurtured child of affluence, should go forth in her early girlhood, seeking to take upon herself the laborious life of a teacher.

How very pale she looked, as, with May clinging to her side for companionship, she took a seat before the grave, serious-looking men who comprised the committee of examination, assembled in the village schoolroom! Each fold of her heavy mourning-dress was tremulous with the faint shudder that stole over her, as, lone, friendless, and almost a child in years, with only the shadow of care resting on her brow, maturing the expression otherwise girlish in the extreme, she sat erect before them. They, gazing with a mingled look of doubt and surprise upon the youthful candidate; examining her all the more severely for that very youthfulness of appearance; striving to elucidate some slight ignorance, no matter how trivial, that they might dismiss her. But all the time she

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grew calmer and more hopeful; and when, at length, clustering together, they questioned themselves only as to her capability to maintain order among pupils several of whom were larger and older-looking than herself, those dark eyes were shining all the while so calm and firm upon them, and the memory of the little ones at home rose so vividly to their minds (for they were growing rebellious, in their long emancipation from the order of the school-room). So the foremost amid them took a step forward, announcing the successful termination of the examination, and installing her as mistress over Deerville School. At that moment, a fair, boyish face, which had been looking in upon them through the crack of the open door, disappeared, with a laugh only half smothered stealing out upon the air.

The only person who had been aware of the presence of the boy-spy was May, and she had divided her attention between him and the gentlemen before her, whom she had several times rebuked for their severe, and what appeared to her impertinent, examination of Ellen, by a proud, wild glance of defiance, shot out upon them from beneath her long, silken lashes.

There was always a beautiful crimson glow on the child's fair cheek; but it was deeper than its wont, that afternoon; and, as Ellen drew her veil over her own pale and wearied countenance, and passed slowly down the village-street homewards, unconscious of the attention she was attracting, May's dark eyes were roving imperiously around, and her small head was raised haughtily erect, as, with the step of an empress, she paced on by her sister's side, the color deepening upon her cheek, her red lip curling disdainfully; for the heart which throbbed within that young bosom was full of mingled goodness, waywardness, and pride.

She did not half like the curious glances which followed the slight figure by her side, with its languid grace and fashionable air, despite the simple toilet. Still less did she like the smile, approaching to derision, which stole over the face of a matronly-looking woman, standing before her garden-gate, conversing with several neighbors, her arm around a tall, rosy-cheeked Hebe, who was also watching them with eager earnestness. "La!" said the woman, in a voice loud enough to reach the child's ear, although unintentionally; "La, that little thing! Why, Bessie, here, would do better;" and she glanced, with a proud smile, to

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her own blooming daughter. May turned suddenly round, darting a glance over Ellen's shoulder, which made the speaker recoil a step from the eyes that literally flashed with passion. Then she placed her hand protectingly on her sister's arm, and passed on with a step statelier than ever. Thus they wended their way homeward. The fancied indifference of the eldest, and the contemptuously defiant glance of the youngest, were left behind them, to breed ill will in their neighbors' hearts; poor Ellen little dreaming of the deadly hostility waking into being, or the gathering storm in May's bosom, until, when nearly home, they passed a little opening, covered with logs, on which sat a group of boys, listening to one of twelve or thirteen years, who was speaking in loud, eager tones. May suddenly withdrew her hand, and, darting towards them, said, in a voice hoarse and almost indistinct with passion, "You wicked, ugly urchins! do you think mamma will permit our darling Ellen to so much as look at you? Come near our house, *one* of you, and I will set Rover on you! I will, indeed!"

"May, May, my sister, are you mad?" said Ellen; and she wound her arm about the child, who was fairly sobbing with grief and passion, utterly unable to comprehend what sudden frenzy had taken possession of her.

"They shall not, they shall not, Ellen, treat you so!" sobbed May, her head upon Ellen's shoulder.

"Who, darling? No one will harm me," answered her sister, soothingly.

"They; but they say they will whip you, Ellen, because you are so small, and turn you out of the school-house; — I heard him. But if you touch her I will kill you, you wicked, murderous boy!" and she shook her hand, hard clenched, at Willie Benson, the boy whom she had overheard make the threat, and whose young face was now red with shame, as he stood the very embodiment of humiliation, the boys all clustering around him.

"O, May! how can you speak so? You make me very unhappy," said Ellen, placing her hand over the quivering lips of May. Then she turned to the half-ashamed, half awe-stricken group. "Boys," she commenced, in a sweet, low voice, bending her clear, sad eyes full upon them, "did you make this threat against me?"

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There was a moment's silence, during which the color deepened on the cheek of Willie Benson. "Yes, ma'am, I did," he answered, at last, truthfully, but with a defiant glance towards May.

Ellen advanced to his side, laid her hand gently on his head, and said very sweetly, but firmly, "You will not attempt, even, to do it. No, Willie; neither will you disobey or trouble me in any way, because I am young and weak. I am a poor, sad, fatherless girl, compelled to teach you for my support. Besides, it will be your duty to treat me with respect, as your teacher; while, on my part, boys, I shall try very hard to win all of you to love me; for it would be sad indeed for me to meet frowning brows, instead of smiling lips; and you, I am quite sure, will wait, and see whether I am not capable of teaching you, before you condemn me."

The group had been gazing upon her, as she spoke, with breathless attention, as though fearful of losing a word. When she ceased, two great tears glistened in the blue eyes of Willie Benson. He made an ineffectual effort to speak, choked, sobbed, dashed his hand across his eyes, and darted away at full speed, followed by the whole troop.

Ellen drew May's hand within her arm, and led her home. She could not find it in her heart to reprove her, although deeply grieved at the stormy passion to which the child had given vent; for it seemed almost ungrateful to chide her impulsive young defender.

But the shadow which lay on Ellen's brow was punishment enough for May, and her pillow that night grew damp with remorseful tears.

When Ellen retired, at a late hour, she found May asleep, her curls thrown back, and her cheeks crimson with emotion.

Ellen placed the lamp where its rays might not awaken her sister, and sat down upon the bed, gazing upon her. It was a face to awaken mingled pride, tenderness and fear; for there was a spirited curl of the red lip, with the gleam of a fading smile lingering thereon, the high, haughty forehead, the long, drooping lashes, and the peculiarly delicate, yet spirited features. Even as she gazed, however, there came a dark frown over the sleeping face, and the beautiful lips curled haughtily; but, even with that flash of passion, great tears stole out, and lay like dew-drops on the cheek. Then a soft, sunny smile, and again May slept tranquilly as an infant. In that lone night-watch was born in the

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heart of Ellen Aubrey a truer knowledge of May's character. She marked the tempest, shower and sunshine, which swept in lightning-like succession over May's spirit, and, kneeling by her side, prayed God to temper the sunshine to the shade; for strength and wisdom to guide her aright in her watch over the rarely beautiful, the wonderfully gifted young creature before her. "Aid me, Father, to guide her, to strengthen her for life's trials!" she murmured aloud, unconscious that the child had awoke, and listened to her. Long after the light was extinguished, and her sister's arm wound lovingly about her, May lay musing, in the silence and hush of night, and resolving — O, so fervently! — to do rightly.

Next morning she accompanied her sister to the school-room, before it was time for the scholars to assemble, and there stood Willie Benson with a bunch of fresh-gathered violets.

Timidly and very humbly he asked Ellen Aubrey's pardon, and it was gently granted; and then he turned to May. Grief and pride swelled in the boy's heart, for he felt that the beautiful child had spoken harshly to him, and he could not ask *her* to forgive. May, with the quick sensibilities of her fine nature, *felt* it all; and, stealing to his side, she murmured, with her great dark eyes full of tears, and the sweetest and most bewitching smile and tone, "I am sorry, very sorry, dear Willie; will you be *my* friend now?"

The smile, the glistening tears, fell like dew upon the boy's heart; his brown fingers closed, with a warm pressure, on the delicate ones of May, and from that hour there were no firmer friends.

The soft, mellow light of sunset stole in and flooded the long, low school-room, with its white-washed walls, and row after row of dark, time-worn benches, ranged the whole length of the wall.

Head above head they ranged; the little lisping child on the front row, — the tall, blooming girl on the last, looking down, in all the pride of girlhood, on the young ones before her.

There were beautiful, innocent young faces amid those boys and girls filling Deerville school-room; bright eyes beaming with intelligence, and others laughing in their light-heartedness; but on the countenances of all lay a shade of wondering curiosity, as the silver chime of the teacher's bell was heard, and then her low, sweet voice calling them to order.

Erect she stood before them, on the broad platform close beside her

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desk, in the little opening in front. The rustling of leaves died away. Each sat silent, motionless, watching her earnestly; for, from the moment when she first stood before them, in the morning, there had been an intense curiosity manifested in every movement of Ellen Aubrey.

There had been some confusion, a good deal of whispering afloat, in the earlier part of the day; and when, after having waited patiently for it to subside, she had chided them, more than one roguish young face had peered over a book, half-laughingly, half-defiantly, at the youthful teacher.

But one there was who sat silent, studious and respectful, though more than once the slight quivering of his lips spoke of his almost uncontrollable inclination to laugh aloud, as frequently a merry whisper from his companions caught his ear; but one glance at the fair, pale face watching over them, with the bunch of blue violets in her belt, which she had found that morning, freshly gathered, upon her desk, and his eye dropped silent upon his book.

There were those, however, who bore it less calmly. One scholar even laughed outright; and the boy's face grew red with shame, for it was his own sister, Bessie Benson. When Miss Aubrey laid aside her book, chiding her with a gentle firmness that should have subdued her at once, the girl tossed her head pertly, turning away to her companions. Then a shade of sadness stole over the face of Ellen, and Willie could scarce restrain his tears. But when Ellen arose, and, in the deep silence around, folded her hands reverently, and bowed her head, saying, softly, "Let us pray to our Father," all heads bent. Low, whispering voices blent with her own, repeating the evening prayer, while the shadows of rebellion faded from even Bessie Benson's face.

Very weary, but not unhappy, Ellen went home that night; for she fancied she had conquered with soft glance and gentle word. She had only too plainly perceived that there was a spirit of opposition abroad to annoy and embarrass her; but from what cause, and from whence it arose, she was unable to conjecture, unconscious of having created, during her short residence in Deerville, either friend or foe; but an earnest determination to oppose all that she either said or did in variance with the old established rules of the school, no matter how trivial, was soon perceptible. There speedily formed a clan, as it were, amid her pupils, headed

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by Bessie Benson, whose defiance and contempt of her authority became only too manifest. It was in vain she alternately chid and remonstrated with the offenders; for, even when she succeeded in thoroughly subduing Bessie, and saw her depart at night with every appearance of penitence, scarce would the school open, on the following day, before some new mode of annoyance would be devised by the incorrigible girl.

In vivid contrast to Bessie was Willie Benson. Every morning a bunch of fresh flowers was gathered by his hand for Ellen. If the sky clouded, and a shower came on, he was ready with an umbrella. Every attention that his loving heart could devise was offered in atonement, as it were, for his sister's offences.

And soon the boy became a frequent guest at the cottage, where Ellen, with her sweet songs, her gentle ways, her angelic goodness to her mother and May, won him to reverence her as a being scarce of this world. And between himself and May there was much deep, though child-like affection.

There was one of whom the boy spoke frequently, and with much affection and reverence. It was the clergyman settled in Deerville, then absent travelling for his health, which had become somewhat impaired by too close application to his duties. He was a nephew of Mr. Benson's, and still a young man. Ellen Aubrey knew that Harry Menton must be very noble and good to win so deep a hold on the heart of his young relative; and Cousin Harry, the minister, became, ere long, a familiar name at the cottage.

The summer was close at hand, when clouds gathered one afternoon, and the rain-drops fell heavily, just as Ellen dismissed her pupils, and turned homewards. She was weary with labors, and she could not help realizing that the care and annoyance of each day was robbing her gradually of hope and strength. Her little salary, however, added greatly to the comforts of the dear ones at home; therefore she struggled on, patiently and courageously.

She had not proceeded many rods, when a hasty step was heard, then Willie's tones fell upon her ear. The next moment he had spread his umbrella above her head, and his pleasant voice was falling cheeringly on her heart. Her grateful, gentle "Thank you, Willie," and May's joyous greeting, were the desired recompense for his thoughtfulness. He

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cared not that the wind beat the rain heavily beneath his umbrella, until he became cold and wet long before he entered his father's house. He paused in the hall but to throw aside his cap, for he heard a peal of laughter in the adjoining room, and, opening the door, he went in. His mother was there, with his sisters, and Bessie was standing before them, all excitement and merriment.

"Was it not absurd, mother?" she said, appealing to Mrs. Benson, after having imitated her teacher's manner in quelling an outbreak among them that afternoon with even more than her wonted dignity and firmness. Bessie was an excellent mimic, and looked so bright and animated, that Mrs. Benson, looking upon Ellen with no favorable eyes, could not bring herself to check the arrogant girl.

But Willie stood looking scornfully, angrily, upon her.

"Bessie," he broke forth, at last, indignantly, "do you remember old Ann Smith, the school-ma'am, that put your head and Sallie Branch's under her desk, and made you sit there until you were so faint you could have fallen, and all because you laughed once?"

"Yes," answered Bessie, growing suddenly grave with the recollection of her severe and never-forgotten punishment.

"Well," pursued the boy, growing more earnest as he proceeded, "do you also remember how, after you had laughed, and made all the boys and girls laugh too, yet Miss Aubrey went up to you, speaking so sweetly and sorrowfully, that it made even the boys feel sorry for her? and that was all, while you are always trying to disturb and provoke her! O, Bessie, Bessie Benson! I am ashamed, ashamed that you are my sister!" and with a faint sob he turned away, having given vent to the extent of his indignation, covering his face with his hands, while heavy tears stole out and fell upon the hearth, where he stood, before the fire.

Bessie was not without feeling, and would probably have approached to soothe him; but just then her father came in, accompanied by the young clergyman, who had that day returned. He was much loved and respected by them all, and very cordial was their greeting. At the first glance, he saw the boy's trouble, which even his arrival failed to banish; but he forbore noticing it, until after tea was over, and Mr. Benson had withdrawn from the room, while the mother busied herself with her needle.

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In the excitement and pleasure of Harry Menton's return, no one noticed the boy's damp clothes, while, with all the recklessness of boyhood, Willie lingered, unwilling to leave him for a moment.

He knew no one to whom he confided all his joys and sorrows, as to his Cousin Harry; and when Bessie took the baby in her arms, and began chatting and laughing to it, on the opposite side of the apartment, he proceeded to pour all his love and admiration of Ellen Aubrey into the sympathizing and attentive ear of Harry Menton. He spoke also of Bessie's waywardness and unkindness, while his companion listened attentively to his story, becoming every moment more and more interested in the young stranger. Willie saw that his attention was aroused, and, sure of having gained one friend, and a powerful one also, for Miss Aubrey, he laid his head that night upon his pillow with a smile of peace upon his lip.

But the following morning found him ill and feverish with a severe cold, proceeding from the imprudence of the preceding night; but no persuasions could induce him to absent himself from school, neither did he forget his customary tribute of affection. All day there was a feverish flush on his cheek, and his eyes were dim and heavy. When the school was dismissed in the afternoon, Ellen spoke to him as he was passing out, and he went up to her, and stood by her side.

"Are you ill, Willie?" she asked, kindly, looking at his flushed cheeks.

He answered, "Not very."

But she pushed back the curls clustering around his fair brow, and it was burning with fever.

"You must take care of yourself, Willie," she continued, "for examination day is close at hand, and I shall be ill able to spare my best scholar."

The boys and girls had all passed out, leaving them alone. Willie Benson never forgot the soft, white hand that rested so gently on his aching head that day; and as he then looked upon her, he little dreamed of the change which was to come; but in that shadowy school-room they parted *forever* on earth, where the echoing laugh of the joyous children stole back on their ear, and no farewell was spoken, — only the gentle, every-day good-by.

Ellen lingered but to close her desk, and turn the great dark key in

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the lock of the outer door; then she also turned homewards. As she passed Mr. Benson's, the young minister came out and met her. Her long dark veil was brushed back, and in the shadow of her hat was a thin, white face, and eyes whose mournful brightness haunted him long after that summer day. With an earnest, respectful gaze, he followed her down the village street, beheld a beautiful young creature bound to her side, wind her arm about her, and pass on.

That was Friday night; and on Sunday morning the sweet, silvery chime of the old church-bell stole out on the bland, summer air, and died away in soft echoes in the far-off hills, and the youthful minister stood up before his people, his dark, serious eyes wandering over the familiar countenances before him, to the strangers' pew; but not on the widow's faded face, nor on the child's radiant beauty, but on the fair, wan brow, with its spiritual loveliness, rested his earnest glance.

A sweeter voice than had ever echoed on his ear before floated up to Heaven with the opening hymn, and with hushed breath he listened to its melody. There was a truthful, simple eloquence pervading the sermon of Harry Menton, which touched the heart of man and child alike; no studied grace, no labored expression, but a holy, fervent simplicity, carrying conviction to all. And never once the glance of the young teacher wandered from him.

The church-bells were ringing for the afternoon service, when Ellen stood before the glass, with her hat in her hand.

"You are looking far from well, Ellen; had you not better remain at home, my child?" said Mrs. Aubrey, struck with her pallid cheek and weary air.

For a moment the girl hesitated. The memory of the clear, sweet voice of the clergyman still lingered in her ear; she had felt so calm and happy in the morning, listening to him, she did not like to stay at home, weary as she was; but the recollection of the coming examination, the labors of the week which that day preceded, whispered her how much she needed rest, and she suffered them to depart without her. But when they had gone, instead of seeking that repose which she so much needed, she stood looking upon herself in the mirror. A long time she stood there. She turned her head partly aside, but was glancing all the while earnestly at the sharpened features therein reflected. A

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deeper pallor settled on her cheek, as she gazed, — an expression of mingled fear and regret, — while tears trembled on her drooping lashes. The conviction of the brevity of her days came over her, as she stood there, silent, alone, the sunshine glancing around her, and the song of wild birds stealing gayly on her ear. "Seventeen summers, and *one winter* so cold this summer's sun melts not its ice!" she said, sorrowfully, and, going up to a table, upon which stood a large, old-fashioned writing-desk, she drew it before the arm-chair in the alcove by the south window, and, opening it, took out a large sealed package. And now her cheek was no longer pallid, but burning with a hot, feverish glow, as she broke the seal, and drew forth several long, elegantly-written letters. They were in a gentleman's hand, and filled with passionate declarations of unchanging affection. Such letters as one might write to his betrothed Robert Etherell had written to Ellen Aubrey; and they had mutually loved; but the man's love had been mixed with worldliness and selfishness. He could forget her who had been his idol in prosperity, when the clouds of adversity overshadowed her. Before her was the long, elegantly-worded, but heartless and worldly letter which parted them; and there, also, in a little oval frame, was his miniature, the dark, laughing eyes, and beaming expression, betraying not the coldness of Robert Etherell's heart.

But, although the girl's cheek flushed at first, it soon faded away. All expression of anger settled into the quiet, sorrowful look then habitual to her. She gazed pityingly down on the handsome face smiling before her; she pressed it to her lips with a faint-murmured adieu, and once more enveloped it in its case, sealing it again, and placing it away, never more to look upon it. No human being but herself could have understood the meaning of the one scornful sentence, — "Seventeen years, and *one winter* so cold this summer's sun melts not its ice!"

At length, the long-looked-for day of the examination arrived, and earnest glances rested upon Ellen Aubrey, for all knew that the events of the day were to decide whether she was to be lauded or blamed. Curiosity gathered many to the school-room, and it was crowded to its utmost capacity. On the broad hearth, in front of the fireplace, stood the teacher's desk and chair; and in front was a small opening, appropriated to the classes to be examined. The committee were present, and

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seated close by Ellen. There was no evading their searching scrutiny of all that during the term had been done. They were there to judge her, and she knew that they were no lenient judges. Many of the comforts of her home hung upon their decision; she had parted that morning with her mother and May with a sinking heart and fading hope; she had glanced at her worn and pallid face, and felt that all the weary cares borne in patience and meekness had availed her naught; that her hopes were about to be crushed into nothingness. But, when they gathered round her, though the blood ebbed back from cheek and lip, and lay heavy on her heart, there came to her eye that serene, beautiful light that was ever shining there when clouds gathered, and life's sea grew stormy.

They never forgot — the people of Deerville — the frail little figure that sat erect in the high-backed chair, in her black dress, with her soft, wavy hair shading her fair young brow, with its look of care. Class after class filed up, and back to their seats, while the expression on the countenances of all became more lenient, more expressive of sympathy for the girl-teacher. There was something in her manner — a gentleness, a tenderness — that touched the hearts of the mothers of the little ones beneath her care. They smiled upon her, notwithstanding her fashionable figure, and her aristocratic air, and the unshaken quietude with which she never once looked to them for their approval, satisfied by the approving voice of her own conscience.

The examination was nearly concluded, when the minister entered the school-room. He recognized the young teacher with a courteous bow, as an acquaintance, although they had met but in the church and the village-street, for Ellen was at school when he called upon Mrs. Aubrey, as a member of his parish. There was something in his glance, and faint but sweet smile, as his eye wandered over the school-room, that fell cheeringly upon the spirit of the weary girl. Willie's friend he was, she knew; she also felt something like friendship springing up in her own heart towards him.

The class last called up contained the eldest of her pupils, and among them Bessie Benson; and, when it came her turn to answer, either through waywardness or girlish diffidence, she hesitated, then stammered forth the very reverse of what she should have said. An expression of pain shot over the face of Ellen Aubrey; then she stepped forward, bent

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her eye steadily upon Bessie, and repeated the question, for it seemed to her that the girl was bent upon annoying her; but it was not then waywardness in Bessie, and, as that glance of quiet dignity recalled her, she rallied instantly, answering proudly and promptly. Ellen felt that, for once, she had been unjust; and she turned, smiling upon her so sweetly, so gratefully, that the not unfeeling girl was touched, in despite of herself. There were many there who caught that gentle smile, but no one so truly comprehended the spirit in which it was born as Harry Menton. When the exercises were completed, after a few words with his colleagues, Dr. Huson, the head of the committee, arose, tendering his thanks to Miss Aubrey for the marked improvement of her charge, expressing their unanimous pleasure.

There was a murmur of approval from many present, and several went up to Ellen, addressing her courteously, if not kindly. She was polite and gentle, but also faint and weary, with little heart to listen to words which at any other time had given her pleasure; and, one by one, they all passed out, leaving her alone. A sensation of weariness and sadness oppressed her. Willie Benson had not been there that day; he was ill, very ill, with a fever. She longed eagerly to go to him, but she had had no time till then. Yet, instead of gathering up the books scattered on her desk, as she was wont to do, and hastening away, she sat down on the chair by its side, laid her face upon its dark, time-worn lid, and, covering it with her hands, wept, not bitterly, but sadly and wearily, as one exhausted. The fading sunlight stole in through the windows, and fell glittering on the heavy tears trickling through her fingers. After a while, there mingled with those tears a faint, low sobbing; and, just then, a shadow lay on the threshold of the door, and Harry Menton stood looking earnestly, pityingly, upon her. But, in a moment, he withdrew as quietly as he had advanced, conscious of the impropriety of intruding on a stranger's grief. The low, faint sobbing, in the deep silence, had fallen on his ear, in passing; but, when he turned from the school-house, instead of going forward, as he intended, he retraced his steps to the Bensons'. Bessie was standing at the garden-gate, gazing listlessly down the street. She glanced up, with a smile, as he approached; but it faded as she caught his grave, rebuking eye. Her hat was hanging on her arm, and he said, very gravely and quietly, "Put your hat on, Bessie,

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and come with me." The girl pouted, and would have refused any one else; but he had a certain power over her which she never resisted, and she followed him silently, though reluctantly, until they were half way to the school-house. Then, as he glanced down, he saw tears were glistening in her eyes, which pride alone repressed; and he drew her hand within his arm, while his glance softened. But still he would not answer her, although she questioned, "What is it, Cousin Harry?"

The sun was low when he led her softly up the green plot, and, holding her by his side, looked into the school-room. Ellen was still sitting there, her head bowed low upon her desk; but one hand had fallen by her side, and the shadows of the coming night concealed her face. She had become quiet; she was no longer sobbing, or sighing; all was still; a profound silence encircled her. Something there was in that deep, breathless hush, with the slight, bowed figure before her, that touched the girl's heart; and when Harry Menton whispered, "Go in, Bessie, and plead with her for forgiveness, — I will wait for you," with a sudden impulse of generosity, she crossed the threshold, and approached her. But when she gained her side she recoiled instantly, with a sharp, frightened cry; and just then May sprang past, with a flying step and excited expression; and again there was a cry, doubly agonizing, and Harry Menton also sprang forward. The little white hand, falling by Ellen Aubrey's side, was not whiter or colder than the face which rested, you might have thought, in peaceful repose upon the desk, but for the fearful pallor and blood-stained lips.

"O, do not touch her! you have killed her!" said May, in a wild, terrified voice, waving them back, as she raised the slight figure in her own frail arms, and bore her to the door.

The evening breeze was rising, sweeping fresh and cool about them, and the young creature sank down upon the threshold of the outer door. She had not strength to stand, trembling as she was with fear and grief; and the head of the unconscious girl lay pillowed on her bosom, while the red light of the setting sun, pouring down upon the white face, with its soft, shining hair, its crimsoned lips, and perfect repose, shone yet further on, lighting up the shrinking figure of the remorse-stricken and frightened Bessie.

For a moment Harry Menton paused, awed by May's wild, passionate

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manner. But, the next, he caught up a cup, standing by the pail half full of water, filled it to the brim, and kneeling down by the side of the fainting girl, damped his handkerchief, wiped the red drops from her lips, bathing her colorless face and chafing her cold hands, while, all the while, Bessie's low sobs mingled with May's faint-whispered words of love and fear.

"Bless you, sir, bless you!" were May's passionate whisperings, as the white lids quivered over the closed eyes, and the breath trembled on Ellen's lip.

"You have not strength; give her to me!" he said, in a low voice of blended gentleness and authority; for he saw that the child's knees trembled like a leaf beneath their burden. May suffered him to take Ellen, clinging only to his side, bowing down over his arm, her face close to Ellen's, and watching her with a wistful, earnest gaze. And all the while a strange, wild thrill was creeping over the soul of the minister, indescribably sweet, although with it there mingled a pang of pain, as he looked upon the wasted young face before him. His eyes were filled with wondrous eloquence, when the first deep breath came, and the glance of Ellen Aubrey was raised dreamily to his. Ellen looked long and earnestly into his face, as though still dreaming, and powerless to comprehend what had occurred; but when a hot tear fell from May's cheek upon her own, a faint color stole into her cheek, she strove feebly to rise from the arm which supported her, and again the white lids dropped, the blue eyes dimmed. Just then a carriage came rolling down the road; a very handsome carriage, drawn by a pair of spirited bays, with coachman and footman in livery. A little girlish creature sat erect upon the back seat, very richly dressed, with a fair, open countenance; and, reclining with an air of *ennui* and carelessness on the opposite one, was a young gentleman of two-and-twenty, sufficiently resembling her to be taken for her brother, only much handsomer, with a less open expression of countenance, and very haughty and aristocratic looking. When his glance fell upon the group by the road-side, he turned round and spoke to the coachman, who drew up before the school-house. Springing to the ground, he joined them, not forgetting, even in the surprise of the moment, to doff his hat low to such a tableau of loveliness as was before him, while Mr. Menton instantly recognized Frank Vernon, the

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young heir of the palace-like home on the hill, whose pillared entrance and white walls were just discernible through the tall trees intervening.

There was an expression of mingled incredulity and surprise on his lip, when Harry Menton, with brief words, related what had passed, and the connection between the fainting girl on his arm and the village school.

"Can't we take her home, Frank?" said a sweet voice, as his young sister Annie stood by his side, her blue eyes full of tears, as she looked down on the fair, still face before her.

"Take her? — yes, love, and this sweet girl also;" and, with a half-stifled sigh, Harry Menton bore Ellen to the carriage, placing her gently on the soft cushions, while Frank Vernon sprang hastily in, and put his arm around her to support her, Annie drawing May also to her side.

There was a faint flush on Harry Menton's cheek when Frank Vernon put his arm around the fainting girl, and a troubled look in his eye; but he stifled the jealous emotion of the moment, and calmed May by promising to follow, when she entreated him not to leave them. Another voice, too, fell upon her ear as they drove off, a voice softer, more musical, than the minister's. A smile so sweet and beaming met her, as she glanced up at the speaker, as hushed the regret upon her lip. She had not heard the sigh with which Harry Menton had relinquished his charge, neither had she noticed the young gentleman's arrogance of manner. She did not comprehend the expression on his countenance, as he gazed upon the exquisite loveliness of the face resting on his bosom. But, with the motion of the carriage, the sufferer revived; the light came back to her eyes, and with it a clear and more distinct recognition of what was passing around her. She raised herself, with a stronger effort, from the arm which supported her; and a stronger effort it required, for it gave Frank Vernon pleasure to support her; but it was a different, a less pure emotion of gratification than had stolen over the heart of Harry Menton. There was nothing of pity mingling with it for the girl's suffering; it was only a pleasing, very romantic adventure. He would not have cared if she had lain there forever, in that exquisite, yet fearful repose, so long as he, unwearied, might look upon her. For a cold, worldly heart beat within his bosom; dark passions, which capricious nature had given to mar the outward beauty of form and feature; passions which a worldly

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life had fostered, — which wealth and unchecked selfishness had nurtured into maturity in the very spring-time of life.

One who knew Frank Vernon well (and there were very few who did know him) could think of nothing to compare him to but a dark, frightful chasm in the earth, with bright flowers waving all around the brink, wooing the dreamer to peril with their beauty and their fragrance. But there was something in the eyes of Ellen Aubrey, when they were raised to his, which subdued their expression of passionate admiration, and caused him to release the little, powerless form from his arm; an innate dignity and purity, unweakened by suffering and helplessness, which even he had no strength to resist. And Ellen was indeed suffering. Even light-hearted Annie Vernon could perceive how sharp was the pain which, with every long-drawn breath, convulsed her. She could not speak aloud; she had no voice but to whisper "Dear May," when the latter covered her face with passionate kisses. But, when the cottage came in sight, and Mrs. Aubrey was seen standing in the door, looking anxiously out in quest of them, Ellen raised herself erect, made a vain effort to smile and to speak when their glances met, and again she lay faint and drooping on Frank Vernon's arm. He bore her in, gently motioning back the footman, who would have assisted him; for he was strong and vigorous, well able to have borne three times her weight, slender and graceful as he looked. But, as he laid her upon the couch, his lips touched her cheek, — not in pitying tenderness, however. He thought, at first, none beheld the act; but when May put her hand in his, with a warm, loving expression, a faint glow shot over his face, for he knew she had noted it; but it did him no injury in the child's eyes. The loving, impulsive heart saw gentleness and sympathy alone in the deed; and when he laid his white, jewelled hand on her own head, speaking soft words of tenderness and pity for her grief, she could have worshipped him, with such magic power had he won her affection. But that kiss, unheeded then, ah, how it haunted her, years afterwards! which no glance but her own beheld, which even she who received it was never to know. And there were other things which also occurred that night that memory recalled long afterwards, to be more truly comprehended. Then, for the first time, Mrs. Aubrey put her back, with something like a faint shudder, when she would have wept on her bosom. She called

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Ellen her "darling," with a faint, murmuring whisper, and only half audibly reproached herself with having permitted her to labor for them; and all the while her glance rested half reproachfully on May; but the latter heeded it only for the passing moment. She also wept and murmured, rebelling against God's will, while Ellen lay unconscious, hour after hour, suffering much pain, and growing ever weaker.

With the consciousness of Ellen Aubrey's danger, there awoke in the hearts of many of the inhabitants of Deerville a degree of remorse for their unkindness. Offers of assistance and sympathy found their way to the cottage. They were received courteously, but not gratefully, for the mother had roused herself from her apathy and listlessness to unwonted sternness; for over her heart stole the conviction that the trials which she had been called to endure had proved too much for one so gentle and fragile.

But there was one whom sorrow and danger summoned to their home, — one whose prayer was to soothe them in the hour of parting, not far off, — who was to guide the fainting spirit through the dark valley of death, pointing to view the broad bright beam of divine love piercing the darkness. But even while the young minister spoke of the ecstatic joy which should succeed the earthly pain of parting, a cloud, dark, and growing ever more palpable at each succeeding interview with the sufferer, was settling down upon his own heart. To know Ellen Aubrey in health and gladness was, to one like Harry Menton, to love her; but to look upon her daily, faint, suffering, but still placid, to commune with her when girlish diffidence and worldly restraint gave way with the passing of life, and all the depth of her woman's heart was revealed, was to forget her *never more*. And Frank and Annie Vernon, too, were assiduous in their attentions. They were charmed with the grace and refinement of the Aubreys. Daily bouquets of rare flowers, and baskets of delicious fruit, passed from the hot-house and conservatory of the Vernons to the cottage. But it was no deep sympathy for the sick that won Frank Vernon there; it was the beautiful face which smiled even through its tears upon him, — the brilliant beauty of May, child as she was.

For more than a week Ellen Aubrey lay as one half asleep, requiring only unbroken silence and repose; but early in the third week that half-fainting rest was broken by fierce, convulsive spasms of pain, after which

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she would seem even more restless and uneasy; and then Dr. Huson, the village doctor, told the people of Deerville that the young teacher was dying, — that life was ebbing with each spasm of pain.

Among the patients of Dr. Huson was Willie Benson, now gradually recovering from the fever which had prostrated him. The first day on which he was permitted to sit in his easy-chair for a little while, his mother wheeled it to the open window, where the warm sunshine fell lovingly about him. He had not sat there many moments before he saw the doctor's carriage approaching, and then Harry Menton, who was below, go out to meet him. For a long time they stood talking earnestly together. When Harry Menton turned round, the boy started; for he was very pale, and he grasped the low fence for support. Then a presentiment of the truth rushed over him, for he knew Ellen was ill, although they had not told him how ill. When Dr. Huson sat down by his side, he found him flushed and trembling. He chided Mrs. Benson for having permitted him to sit up too long, gave him something to take, bade him lie down, and left him. Willie did not question him. Once or twice he had endeavored to speak, but his voice died away; and when Dr. Huson was gone he hid his face in the bed-clothes and wept. Bessie went in to sit with him, for they thought he slept; but the clothes trembled, and his sobs broke upon her ear. She went to him, and, kissing him kindly, asked the cause of his grief. For a while he looked upon her sorrowfully and reproachfully; then he asked, softly, "Is she dead, Bessie?"

"Dead! O no, Willie," answered his sister, with an expression of deep pain.

"Is she dying, Bessie?" he continued.

"I don't know, Willie. I wish it was me!" and with that sorrowful, passionate answer, she too wept.

"Bessie," said the boy, "would you not feel very bad, if she should die and not forgive you?" His companion answered not, but shuddered; and he went on. "I once treated her very badly, Bessie; but when I was sorry, and carried her the blue violets, she kissed and forgave me. Go get some roses, darling Bessie, and tell her Willie sent them to her, and she will pardon you; and I, — O, how I will always love you, Bessie!" But he had to coax and persuade her a long time, before she had the courage to go.

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The afternoon had come when Bessie, at last, stood before the cottage door, with a spray of roses drooping in her hand. She was striving for courage to enter, when a faint sob from within fell upon her ear, and she opened the door and went in. The blinds were closed, and, as she passed through the hall, before the half-open parlor-door, they did not notice her, in the dim light; but she saw May, with Frank Vernon standing by her side, one white hand resting on her drooping head. Annie, also, was there, weeping with May. The young gentleman caught a glimpse of her, and stepped forward. For a moment he stood eying the beautiful rustic from head to foot. Grief had dimmed the girl's bold, black eyes, and tears trembled on her drooping lashes and crimsoned cheeks, as she stood there, a meek, sorrowful expression on her countenance. "Can I see Miss Ellen?" she said, at last, timidly, weary of his scrutiny. "I want to take this to her," holding up the spray of roses, as she spoke.

"You had better give them to me, pretty one. The sick lady would not care for them, and I should prize them from your fair hand."

He said this with his winning smile; but the girl held them tightly in her hand, drawing back, and speaking louder, in her earnestness. "No, I cannot give them to you, sir; for Willie sent them, and I must give them to her. May I not?" she said, appealing to May, as she came forward.

For a moment May Aubrey stood gazing upon her, the blood rushing to her cheek, the light flashing to her eyes. "No," she answered, at length, sternly, in accents very unnatural, coming from such youthful lips. "No; for it is *you*, Bessie Benson, who have killed her. She is dying, up there, our darling, darling Ellen!" and, with a low, agonized sigh, her head sank upon her bosom. As she spoke, the color had all faded from Bessie's cheek. She suffered the roses to fall upon the floor, and without a word tottered to the door and went out.

The sun was no longer shining brightly. The sky had become overcast, and heavy drops of rain fell before she reached home. She did not enter Willie's chamber, but stole away up to a room in the attic. There was a chair standing before the low window overlooking the cottage. She sat down and began to weep, — to weep bitterly. She had been there a long time, when a carriage rolled by, and looking up she saw that it was the Vernons' carriage. Frank was in it, with Harry Menton, the young

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clergyman, whose face was pale as death. She saw them draw up before the cottage, her cousin alight, and in a few moments Annie Vernon came out and sprang in. As they passed the house, Bessie saw that Annie was weeping; but her brother leant carelessly back on the seat, while a note from the opera-air which he was humming stole upon her ear. The rain had ceased to fall. The carriage-top was put back, and the girl thought him wondrously handsome, as he leant back on the cushions of the carriage, for all his apparent heartlessness.

The vision of the dying Ellen faded with the memory of the earnest glance which he had bent upon her that day. Her dark, shining ringlets were falling over her face. She raised her head, shook them back with a gesture of pride, while her glance wandered to the white-pillared entrance of the Vernons. She bowed her head upon the window-sill; her tears no longer flowed; bright smiles chased each other over her handsome face; her eyelids drooped.

The low room, with its dark rafters above, was changed to a vast drawing-room, with stuccoed ceilings, tall mirrors, and silken couches; and she, also, was there, in glittering jewels and costly attire. But all the while there was ringing upon her ear a note of music, indescribably sweet, — so sweet she had no power to break upon its melody, though all the while a serpent was winding its way amid the flowers woven in the carpet, its glittering eye upon her. Not even when its breath burnt upon her cheek, and drank her own; not until it wound its treacherous coils about her heart, crushing it, while all the while the low music of Frank Vernon's voice, humming the opera-air, was ringing in her ear. With a wild struggle for freedom, she awoke, the cold sweat standing bead-like on her brow, and the fading light of the departing day revealing to the dreamer the attic-room.

She put her hand faintly to her head, for it was aching, aching fearfully; and a long, reverberating peal of thunder shook the house. Daylight was fading in the tempest, and as she looked out there shone a light from a chamber-window in the cottage. It beamed like a star in the darkness, and again Bessie wept.

The star-like light was shining from the chamber where Ellen Aubrey lay upon a couch, propped up with pillows, calm, serene, all suffering forever over. The soft eyes beaming radiantly on the mother bowed by

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her side, May weeping in terrible agony, Harry Menton standing, with folded arms, much of worldly anguish on his countenance, much of heavenly faith and resignation in his glance. The dying girl gathered up the white linen, pressing it close about her, for she was very cold, shivering beneath the icy hand leading her from earth. But her words were of summer and sunshine. "Thou hast sent the bright sunshine now, Father," she said; "the winter's frost, the long winter's frost, melts. Forgive thy wayward one, who has rebelled, and mourned after the sunlight." There was a deep, lingering sigh, but no struggle shook the frail one thus falling asleep.

All night the lightning played around the sleeper; all night the thunder crashed above her. But it woke her not. Life's storms were over.

Three weeks afterwards, the Vernons sailed for Europe, to be absent a long time; and Mrs. Aubrey and May were alone. The mother's grief was silent, but very deep. She grew more gentle, more quiet, than ever; but she never smiled, and there were many days when she sat for hours as one in deep and troubled thought; and, when May was present, she would follow her with a loving yet troubled glance. But May's grief was wild, despairing; she would steal away to the church-yard, and weep by Ellen's grave, until so thoroughly worn and exhausted she would totter home, pale, fainting and calm. Harry Menton alone had the power to soothe her; she shunned all society but his and Willie Benson's; and, although she strove against it, she would, for a long time, grow faint and tremble, if chance threw her in contact with Bessie.

Five years after Ellen Aubrey's death, our story again opens. Time has little changed the inhabitants of Deerville, with the exception of the Bensons, upon whom sickness and poverty have fallen. The once cheerful old homestead is deserted, and the widow lives, sore pressed, at some distance from the village. Many losses and embarrassments came to the kind, good-hearted farmer; then long weeks of suffering, followed by death. Bessie, the eldest child, grown into a beautiful girl, has gone to live with a cousin of her mother's, in New York, a flourishing dressmaker; and Willie, the ever-faithful friend of Ellen Aubrey, has made the rolling billow his home. But at Maple Cottage the fire burns brightly upon the parlor-hearth; for the night is clear and cold, and the winter season at its commencement. Mrs. Aubrey is seated by the fire,

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looking very pale and delicate, with her hands clasped listlessly on her knee, listening to May, who is singing to her. Five years have also changed her. She has fulfilled the brilliant promise of her childhood. Time has but added to her loveliness. She is strictly beautiful, with all the fire and graceful impulse of a spirit peculiar from its mingled goodness and passion. There is a resemblance between herself and Mrs. Aubrey, but not like that which existed between the mother and her eldest child.

While May sang, there was a familiar knock, and a gentleman entered. With a glad smile, she sprang up to welcome him. It was Harry Menton, thinner than of old, slightly bowed, and pale, but with a deeper light in his dark eyes. He looked like one who had struggled long and patiently with suffering, to find serene happiness at last. He was the idol of his people; they looked upon him as their comforter in sorrow, their sympathizer in happiness.

And May Aubrey—the wild, passionate, haughty, the warm, loving, impulsive girl—was the minister's betrothed. There were those who wondered at his choice; but they were those who least knew May. They who did wondered not that he who had watched over her with a brother's watchfulness from childhood, he who could always win her to the right, should learn to look upon her with a yet deeper emotion. No one murmured at their pastor's choice, little fitted as May seemed for a clergyman's wife; so deep a hold had he won upon his people's hearts, that whatever seemed right unto him was well in their eyes.

And did May Aubrey love Harry Menton, the quiet, serious student, he who had loved Ellen? Yes; she did not even feel regret when he told her of that love the memory of which had so long clung to his spirit, but loved him yet more that he had mourned with no common sorrow for the dead. But there was much of reverence mingling in May's heart with her love; it was a calm, deep affection, which was not natural to a heart like hers. One would have thought, when May Aubrey loved, it would have been wildly, passionately, recklessly; but it was not so.

He made her sit down again, and sing to *him*, also. She sang very sweetly; although her voice required cultivation, still it was peculiarly sweet and rich. For a long time she sang to them; then, when she grew weary, Harry Menton placed a chair for her by the fire, and, taking up a

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volume, read aloud to them in return. After a while, he laid down his book, drew his chair to May's, and began speaking of the future, while May listened quietly, neither blushing nor embarrassed, but laughing occasionally her low, merry laugh, as though her heart was full of quiet happiness.

And, while the lover spoke hopefully of the future, and his young betrothed listened, Mrs. Aubrey sat dreaming in her chair.

"Do you know, I have had glad news, Harry, from my friend Annie Vernon?" she said, suddenly looking up; and, drawing a long, delicately-written letter from her pocket, she gave it to him to read. But he did not look as much gratified as she anticipated, when he gave it back to her; for there was one passage in the letter that sent a sudden indescribable sensation of pain through his heart, when Annie spoke of Frank; but it passed instantly, and he smiled upon the girl's gladness, and anticipation of coming joy.

Christmas morning came, and the Vernons' carriage drew up at Maple Cottage. Annie had arrived, with a party of friends, the evening previous, and was impatiently waiting to greet her; but the hour wore on, and still she came not forth, for the memory of the lost one had swept over her, as, with a thrill of joyous anticipation, she thought of Annie Vernon. But, when she caught her mother's eye, with a tear trembling therein, as she turned radiant from the mirror, once more she heard the sweet voice of the dead. The color faded from her cheek, the glad smile from her lip; and, with a faint sob, she sank down by Mrs. Aubrey's side, and wept, — wept, as she had done a thousand times, wildly, sorrowfully, while the horses neighed impatiently without, and the coachman glanced wistfully to the door, which opened not.

Beautiful looked the girl, as she sat there, even in that moment of sorrow, with the rich folds of the dark, old-fashioned brocade, a remnant of other days, falling about her.

With a faint, chiding smile, Mrs. Aubrey kissed her, soothing her as she would a grief-stricken child, calling her fond, loving names, until she won back the smile, in its beauty, to her lip, as she sprang into the carriage, the tears yet damp on her cheek. The glasses were all up; she lowered them, suffering the clear, cold air to fan her flushed cheeks.

With the motion of the carriage in the glowing sunlight, sorrow and

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care passed away. With a glad whisper on her lip, she bent forward, as the carriage drew up, for a slight, girlish figure lingered, impatient, on the threshold of the wide-open door, sprang forward, and caught her in her arms, drawing her joyously on to the drawing-room, where the fire flashed radiantly on the broad marble hearth, and the sunshine stole in softened gleams through the velvet curtains. With childlike affection the two young creatures kissed each other's red lips, murmuring their joy at meeting. And, as they stood there talking earnestly and eagerly, a graceful, elegant-looking man entered from the conservatory, while, with a smile and faint blush, May Aubrey recognized Frank Vernon. Time had changed him more than Annie; he had grown taller, larger; the long lashes drooped not as much as formerly; the large blue eyes looked larger and darker; they beamed as though a spirit of unrest was looking out from their clear depths. His air was bolder, his voice deeper-toned.

There were many other guests also present, that day; but Frank Vernon himself took May out to dinner. He turned the leaves of the music-book for her, when she sang to them; danced with, and then led her away, when wearied and heated, to the conservatory. There he wheeled a low arm-chair into the moonlight, and, gathering a handful of fragrant flowers, threw them in her lap, and, sitting down by her side, made her tell him how life had passed since they parted. And May told him, with smiles and tears, all; but of Harry Menton, — never once she alluded to the bond between *them;* she felt a strange, unaccountable reluctance to speak of him rising up in her heart. When she recalled it that night, she wondered at it herself, but could not account for it. And Frank told her of his travels, of his sojourn in Italy for many months, fascinating her with the poetic fervor, the impassioned eloquence, of his words. She was unconscious of the long time she had sat there, listening to him, till Annie's gay voice fell upon her ear. "Ah, I have found you truants, at last," she said, laughingly; "Mr. Menton waits impatiently your coming, dear May, in the drawing-room." May rose instantly, to follow her; but Frank drew her hand in his arm, and detained her a moment, to look at a beautiful white rose, just budding, and, when they turned, Annie had left them.

"Who is Mr. Menton?" questioned the gentleman, quietly looking down on his companion's face.

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"Why, surely, you have not forgotten him,—Harry Menton!" answered May, with a slight accent of surprise, but a deeper color on her cheek.

"Ah, no; now I remember. The clergyman here;" and as he spoke they passed into the drawing-room, May leaning on his arm, the flowers drooping in her hand which he had given her. With a careless, graceful air, he led her up to Mr. Menton, welcomed him courteously, and left them, after a few moments' conversation.

There was no want of courtesy, that evening, in the bearing of Frank Vernon towards Harry Menton. He even waived his right as host, and suffered him to hand May to the carriage when she left; but he *did* hold her hand longer than was necessary when he bade her good-night, and, chide himself as he would, Harry Menton could not banish the thought of him from his heart.

The succeeding morning, a bouquet of beautiful flowers filled the vase on the Aubreys' centre-table. The conservatory of the Vernons could alone produce those frail, fragrant buds, while the snow lay deep on the flower-beds of Deerville; and May's white fingers lingered lovingly amid their bright leaves, even after her betrothed drew his seat to her side.

Nearly a month went by, joyously to May; for the companionship of Annie was very pleasant to the long-lonely girl, and the taste and refinement of the home at which she was received as a loved and familiar guest was also appreciated by May, a worshipper of the beautiful, and a peculiarly proud and aristocratic spirit. Life looked brighter in the luxurious drawing-room, with music and adulation stealing on her ear, than in her own quiet little room at the cottage. And while May's face brightened, Harry Menton's became, not cloudy, but each day graver, more serious, as though a presentiment of coming sorrow lay upon his heart, ever feeding his spirit with unrest.

And yet there was no palpable cause for uneasiness in his heart. May was as gentle and affectionate as she had ever been towards him;—smiling when he came, looking her regret when he departed. But the expression on his countenance became ever more serious with each interview with Frank Vernon at the cottage, although he rarely went there unaccompanied by Annie. Yet flowers daily filled May's vases, nominally the sister's gift, but rare and significant in their language; as though the

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eye of love had singled them out, to whisper, with their perfume, of the absent. And May,—had she no suspicion of what was passing around her,—of the cloud that was gathering afar off, rolling so slow, but surely, towards her? No; serene, bright as a summer-day, she was sporting amid the flowers of hope and gladness springing upwards in her path, hiding the precipice's brink. She was blind to the glance which dwelt upon her beautiful face so passionately, for it was sedulously concealed when her eye met his. She did not understand the dangerous music of the voice whose careless words robbed the deeper tone, apparently, of its significance. She forgot that that voice lingered on her ear long after he had left her. But the awakening from that dream-like unconsciousness was very close at hand.

It was snowing fast, and very cold, even for a day in January; but the fire burnt brightly in the Vernons' library, and May felt not the cold without. She had been spending the previous day with them, and they could not permit her to leave while the snow was falling. Annie was writing letters in her own apartment, and for some time May Aubrey had sat there conversing with Frank Vernon. He had wheeled a deeply-cushioned reading-chair by her side, and leant far back on its cushions, with an air of weariness, his eyelids drooping low. "I had a wild, sorrowful dream, last night. It has robbed me of my strength," he said, breaking a momentary silence; and his voice was languid, and there was a slight pallor on his cheek. "May I tell it to you, Miss Aubrey?" She smiled, and answered in the affirmative. He placed his elbow on the arm of his chair, and, shading his eyes with his hand, spoke, in a voice scarce above a whisper, but very clear and audible, to his companion, though it trembled more than once, apparently from agitation. "To explain to you the effect it has produced upon me, I must tell you all,—lay open to you the history of my life. Will it interest you, Miss Aubrey?"

Again she answered "Yes;" still she sat before him calm and serene, and he, with his eyes shaded, proceeded.

"Years ago, I met a beautiful, loving, impulsive child. I looked upon it as I would upon an exquisite flower far from me; but when it bent towards me, just as a faint breath of that flower would wake in me a desire to inhale all its fragrance, just so, when in its sweet, childish way it con-

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fessed its almost babyish love for me, with the first whisper came over me an intense, ardent longing for the mighty flood of love and tenderness murmuring unheard in the little one's bosom. I touched the fair, unconscious brow with my lips, and knew that I was the first to seal it with the kiss of love; not a brotherly love, but a wild, ungovernable, never-ending love, such as man bears to the one who has been given to him as his hope, — the one heavenly boon vouchsafed to mortals on earth. I began to picture my child-love sprung to womanhood, — the woman's heart, unfathomable, inscrutable to any other man's eye but my own; — I, who had read its pure pages in the unguardedness of childhood; who had early found and grasped the key of affection which would open even the high barrier of pride that the proud, loving, but wilful spirit would raise, making us, through all eternity, *one in soul*. My flower grew, sheltered from the world's eye, where no amateur in beauty would be like to look upon its loveliness. I dreamed that the voice which had won love-words to those young lips would dwell forever in its memory, and when the woman's heart awoke it would recognize in those haunting tones the *voice of love*. I went far away; suffered land and sea to lie between us. In a foreign home, beneath the blue sky of Italy, I met the very impersonation of the glory and voluptuousness of that sunny land. The glorious beauty of the Italian woman awoke the poetry of my being, and *that girl loved me*, breathing to the cold American the burning passion which she had conceived for him. He looked upon her radiance, dimmed for him, her devotion, her anguish; — the thought of his wild-flower at home, blooming for him alone, lay warm at his heart, and *he left her*. Last night I dreamed a stranger's hand had gathered my beautiful bud, — it was drooping and fading in another's clasp. The sky was dark, and out of its darkness looked forth the radiant, passionate face of the Italian, whispering so wildly, '*Thine no more; never, never more!*' 'Mine no more; *ah, never more!*' went echoing up to heaven; and life's bark floated silently over the waves of Time, while on the inner shrine of memory's fane lay only the gray ashes of perished joys."

He had uncovered his face when he spoke of the last night's dream, and his glance turned full upon May; but her own sought the carpet, and her cheek was white as the little hands folded upon her knee. While he was speaking she never once looked up. A weight was upon her lids,

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sealing them over eyes growing darker in their misery. When he ceased, after a moment's profound silence, she raised her head. Their glances met. Then a deep, hot glow shot over her face. She put back, with a gesture of haughty scorn, the dark, wavy hair drooping over her brow, and turned to leave the room silently, speaking no word, glancing no more towards him. "May," came in a soft whisper to her ear. Her step wavered on the threshold; she turned partly round. Frank Vernon's head was drooping wearily; his cheek was pallid, not with sadness; passion paled his cheek. The actor was exhausted. A tear glistened on May Aubrey's drooping lashes, and Frank Vernon was alone. He arose and loosened the curtain gathered back from the deep embayed window which alone lighted the apartment, suffering its dark, rich folds to fall over the glass; and a shadowy, rosy light lay about him. He stirred the fire until its flame rose high and flashed joyously; then he threw himself into the chair whose soft cushions were yet warm with the light pressure of the fair creature that had sat there; and all the while the expression of wild exultation was deepening on his countenance.

Still it snowed fast; still it was intensely cold, although the evening had come. May was at home.

Mrs. Aubrey had been taken suddenly ill. Harry Menton, even then, when she parted from young Vernon in the library, was waiting in the drawing-room to take her home, notwithstanding the storm; for the sick one waited restlessly her coming. Annie had met her in the hall, and her sudden intelligence of her mother's illness accounted for her extreme agitation, but not for the faint shudder which crept over her, and caused her to shrink back from Harry Menton's side, when he would have soothed her sorrow and anxiety.

But he had gone; and she was alone, but for the presence of the sick one, dozing quietly while she watched by her side. Alone, but for the memory of the morning hours, pressing upon her heart; and it was well that no eye looked upon her, as she sat there, faint, despairing, hopeless, stunned by the revelation of the morning. A dense, palpable gloom had clouded the horizon of life, through which no star-beams of hope were visible. How had a few hours changed the whole aspect of her future life! Hitherto her heart had been full of sunshine and gladness; now it was hopeless and desolate. She had no courage to question herself as to

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what was right for her to do, for she could not distinguish the right with all that misery pressing so heavily upon her. She did not feel that she had sinned in loving Frank Vernon when she was the promised wife of Harry Menton, for she had not anticipated it. The tempter had stolen into her heart, drank deep of the fountains of life unperceived. But all the pure teachings of Harry Menton were whispering her, and strengthening. She would struggle against her love for Frank; she would even marry Harry Menton, if he desired it; but she would be frank with him, confess all, at the cost of whatsoever pain to herself it might inflict; for all the natural goodness of her heart was roused; Frank's sorrowful, despairing "*Mine no more, O, never more!*" lingered on her ear, and she wept; but, after a while, arose, and, going up to the window, laid her hot cheek to the cold, icy glass. O, how dreary seemed earth to her then, with that firm, true, bitter resolution resting so coldly on her heart! — her young, hopeless heart! But, as she stood there, her tears ceased to flow, an expression of quiet resignation passed over her countenance. Her glance had swept the snowy plain before her to the hill's brow, where, one by one, the lights flashing from Frank Vernon's home were extinguished, back to the village, where, not far off, gleamed a light steadily and long out into the midnight from the minister's study.

The winds of winter were sighing themselves to rest, and the twilights were lengthening; but they were very lonely to May, for she was alone, with no near kindred on earth to cherish her. Mrs. Aubrey slept by her child's side in the village grave-yard; a week the people of Deerville had looked upon her grave, and sympathized with the youthful mourner. There was one who would never have left her to loneliness, but for the deeper gloom which he only too plainly perceived his presence had imparted.

May was seated alone. The fading light of day, with the rays of the fire, but dimly lighted the room; her chair was drawn close to the hearth, and she looked care-worn and sad.

Judith, the faithful old woman who had been her nurse in infancy, and clung to them in their obscurity, went in to light the lamp upon the mantel; but her young mistress sent her away, and with a heavy sigh she departed. A little while and she returned, pushed the small table

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towards the fire, placing thereon a tray, covered with many little delicacies, to tempt her; but May answered, "Take them away, Judy; my head is aching, — I cannot eat;" and sorrowfully, glancing all the while anxiously upon her, she obeyed, and again May was alone.

A little while, and there was a familiar knock at the door, and Harry Menton entered. May sprang not forward to greet him, as she had been wont to do in days gone by.

He drew a seat to her side; he strove to cheer her. Long and eloquently he spoke of the lost one's goodness, paying all those kind tributes to her memory that are so soothing to the bereaved; of the connection still existing between the maternal spirit in heaven, watching over her child on earth; and, with bent head, May listened, never interrupting him. Gradually he also lapsed into silence; it continued long, — so long that it became embarrassing, and May herself spoke, — "Harry!" He looked up eagerly, but slightly pale. — "I have been striving, this long time, to open my heart to you. You have thought, and I also have, Harry, until recently, that it was open to you long before; but we have been deceived; it has been sealed even to me, until now, — and now, O, all its misery is revealed." She could say no more; her head was bowed, her hands covered her face. And Harry Menton, — all along he had been expecting this; but when it came, these words were spoken which were to crush the last hope of earthly love from his bosom, he felt that all the strength which he had gathered for that hour of trial was passing away. With a half-unconscious movement he turned to leave the room; but it was momentary, — the low, choking sob which fell upon his ear recalled him. He passed his hand impetuously across his forehead, as though he would smooth away his anguish, and went up to her, drawing away the hands which covered her face. "May," he said, "you must look up and talk with me; you must still this wild misery, — subdue this terrible yearning for death which is filling your heart in this hour of trial. Not in God's eyes, beautiful, beloved one, neither in my own, have you sinned. You courted not this more passionate emotion which has swept over your soul, and filled your heart with the unquiet waters of remorse; soothe them to rest with a fervent, pleading prayer for strength, — strength to be strong. You have not deceived me, May, — I have no heartlessness to pardon; your truthful-

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ness gives me a right still to love, to watch over, to guard you when another's help you need, and there are none but me to aid. No thought of bitterness will steal in where love of you has dwelt, and still you also shall love me with the sweet, olden affection." All the while he had been speaking, there had been something like unto a smile, or a ray of sunshine, brightening his whole pale countenance, until it looked like an angel's in its nobleness and goodness.

As he ceased speaking, May raised her tearful eyes till they rested full upon him. She said softly, quietly, "I never loved you so well as now, Harry!"

He started for a moment, again looked earnestly into those dimmed eyes; — they were full only of sorrow. "Is there not one whom you have given a yet deeper affection, May?"

Instantly the hand he held freed itself from his clasp. She stood up, leant her arm upon the mantel-piece, her eyes flashing, her cheeks crimsoned; passionately haughty she stood gazing upon him. He also arose, took those small hands firmly in his own. Bending down his eyes, full of rebuking gentleness, he said, "May, you are passionate, — May, you are haughty; you think that I would presume upon the relation which has existed between us, to intrude upon your confidence. With your capability of loving so devotedly, O, subdue, crush the passion, the pride, that will otherwise cause you much misery! You think I would intrude upon you; — listen to me. I loved Ellen, as one would an angel; for when we first met death's seal was upon her brow; earthly love mingled with the spiritual, but not long. Earthly hopes centred on you. We have spoken of the quiet home which should be *ours*, May; I have pictured you there, until it was difficult to realize I could not flee to it when weary and sad. Gradually (and I thank God that it has been no sudden blow, that I have strengthened myself to bear it) I have learnt that the fair picture fading from my own vision was growing clearer to that of another. But I yield these hopes; I resign you without a murmur. I will strive to repine not, though, in this hour of parting, I love you as I have, — as I ever shall through life, — next to my Creator. I will leave you; go back to life's duties, lone, desolate, and bless you as I go, asking only that you shall never seek to put from your heart the memory of a love which would dwell there *but* as a talisman against sor-

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row. In recompense for this, May, child of my care, beloved of my manhood, recall it when passion burns your cheek, when undue pride makes cold your glance, and, saving you an hour's grief, years of loneliness will be repaid."

"Ellen prayed for me in childhood; pray thou for me in womanhood, Harry, and I will be strong to suffer!" The tears were raining fast through May Aubrey's clasped fingers; a hand rested in silent blessing upon her head, and Harry Menton had left her.

"Dear May, I have been thinking this long while of a question I would like much to ask you, — will you permit me?" It was Annie Vernon who spoke. She had driven over in the early morning to see May, for she was dear as a sister to Annie, and she attributed her sadness and deep melancholy wholly to her late bereavement; so with gay words she strove to cheer her, but in vain; for she was even sadder than her wont that morning. The thought of Harry Menton lay dark and heavy at her heart.

As Annie sat watching her, a sudden, vague idea of the truth flashed over her. She recalled Frank's abrupt departure at the period of Mrs. Aubrey's illness, supposed then a mere capricious whim of the moment, and also her companion's excessive agitation on the morning of her last visit to them.

May averted her face as the girl spoke, for she felt her cheek burn with a conscious glow. Annie comprehended it immediately; and, winding her arm about her, asked, in a low voice, "Do you know, May, that Frank left us in sorrow?" A tear fell from May's cheek upon her own, but she said nothing in reply.

"May," again whispered Annie, "will you marry the rector? will you become Harry Menton's wife?"

"No, Annie; Harry and I have parted. He is very good, very generous; — *too* good for me, Annie."

Her companion gazed upon her beautiful face, her soft, beaming eyes, with an expression of doubt as to whether any one could in truth be worthy of one so lovely. But she only kissed her lovingly, and hurried home. What meant that warm, bright smile on Annie Vernon's lip, as she entered her carriage? What long letter was that which she wrote

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before she dined, that it might be in time for the evening mail? filling every little white corner, until it looked very like a love-letter; and loving it was, — full of sisterly endearments and kind hopes, all too unworthy of him whom it was to summon back, with bland whispers and smiles of triumph, to the orphan's side. Little you dreamed, gentle Annie Vernon, of the grief in which your joy for him was born; or you had wept, not smiled, over that letter, gratifying as it was to your idol Frank.

Not many days afterwards, May stood, one evening, looking out from the south window, her cheek laid wearily against the glass. She was just turning away, when a dark figure intercepted between the window and the road. It advanced rapidly, and her heart beat wildly, as there came an impatient knock at the hall-door. She heard old Judith admit the stranger, but she moved not; she was faint, as though the hand of death was upon her; the heart which beat so wildly stopped. "May!" came softly to her ear, like an electric shock, recalling her to life. She turned, the color richly glowing upon her cheek. "Beloved May!" and Frank Vernon clasped her passionately to his bosom. "O, May, I have been so unhappy, so miserable! and it is you who have made me so! Will you not dissipate it? will you not drive my anguish away? I would die for you! will you not live for me? Will you not love me? — I, who love you more than life, soul, heaven, my flower! my wild, fragrant flower, ungathered!" And in that hour Frank Vernon did love her, as much as his nature was capable of, — wildly, passionately, not holily or steadfastly. It was burning, delirious passion, the violence of which overwhelmed her. Sorrow and care had robbed her of the natural energy of her character; and, half fainting, calmly she lay upon the arm which encircled her, listening to his words, with a sweet, trusting smile; and Frank Vernon knew that his labors were over, that no mortal power could take from him the treasure which he had won.

There was something of annoyance and dissatisfaction mingling with the surprise with which Mr. Vernon learnt the dismissal of Harry Menton by May, and her subsequent acceptance of his son; but Frank was all-powerful with the old gentleman, and, though there lingered yet in his bosom a feeling of disappointment and regret, that he should have singled out from amid the many the poor, lone orphan May, — when he looked upon the beautiful face lifted, with a child's confidence, to his, he

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forgot the worldliness within him, and spoke gently and tenderly to her, as he would have done to his own motherless and only daughter. And Annie Vernon was wild with joy; she called May her "beloved sister," and only lacked words to express her delight. She would fain have induced her to shut up the old cottage, and live with them until she was ready to become Frank's wife; but May refused, steadily, firmly, even Frank, when his entreaties were joined to Annie's. Something within her own heart whispered her it were better for her to remain where she was, with old Judith. An innate delicacy to Harry Menton, to whom she had been so recently betrothed, bade her defer her marriage with another until time should throw its softening veil over what must, notwithstanding all his fortitude, but thrill his heart with bitter pain; and, after a while, her lover became less urgent; he no longer spoke of it; while May, in the fulness of her trust, blessed him for his forbearance. The summer passed quietly and happily, notwithstanding Frank Vernon's prolonged absence from home, at the gay resorts of the fashionable world; for Annie was much with May, and she had also her own bright hopes for companionship, never once attributing Frank's absence to neglect or forgetfulness of herself; for the frequent letters which she received were eloquent with affection. But, at length, one morning, late in September, just before the Vernons' departure for town, and when May was beginning to admit herself disappointed at the non-appearance of her lover, Annie Vernon rode over to see her. There was a troubled look hovering about her lip, and a slight redness of the eyelids, as though she had been weeping; her air was hurried and nervous; something was evidently weighing heavily on her mind. She knew not how to express herself; for she was conscious if May knew all the doubts and facts that had suddenly come to her own knowledge, it would crush the joy late born in her heart into nothingness. But May did not notice Annie's agitation until she spoke, and then she readily accounted for it by her friend's eagerness. She had come to plead with May to accompany them to town. She even carried her father's urgent entreaties for her to consent. She pleaded long and earnestly. The prospect of a lonely winter was before May, and she consented; but with a vague presentiment of coming sorrow, for which she chided herself more than once as it intruded

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again and again upon her, in her hasty preparations for her immediate departure.

Old Judith would have fain remonstrated, had she dared to; but she contented herself with active zeal, endeavoring to add to her young mistress' comfort. The afternoon before she left, May, in looking for some papers of value, and unable to ascertain where they were deposited, in searching Ellen's desk, which was large and old-fashioned, and which she had scarcely ever opened, accidentally pressed, in her haste, a small sliding-panel, which gave way, disclosing a deep recess, well filled with papers. One package was sealed and undirected; she opened it. It contained Robert Etherell's letters and his miniature. Long May looked upon it; long she pondered over the letters before her. How eloquent they were of affection! what a soft, winning smile there was on the picture's lip! and how cold and heartless the last of the many letters there! Memory recalled Ellen, and many little incidents nearly forgotten, which those letters explained; and the last, perhaps it was that which had killed her. Her tears rained upon the picture's face. She sat there a long time, until a sound below aroused her, — a voice which made her faint and tremble and put them hurriedly away, to look upon another time. It was many moments before she was able to descend, for Harry Menton was there, awaiting her coming. He had never been there since the night in the spring when they had parted. Several times she had beheld him pass the cottage, but he never looked up; and when they met, he always bowed gravely, yet not coldly. As she entered, he arose and gave her his hand. His manner evinced no agitation or embarrassment. It was evident that he had schooled himself to perfect resignation to his destiny.

But his countenance gave token of the bitterness of the struggle. He looked many years older; there were more white hairs amid the dark ones, and he was slightly bowed. But the smile upon his lip was even more sweet and winning than in the days of his happiness. He alluded not to the past; he had come only to bid her good-by ere she left them, not for his own gratification, — for to him it was full of pain, — but that his quiet, passionless farewell might be a consolation to her, if her heart was pained at the part which fate had forced upon her so unwillingly. He staid not long, but his presence soothed her; it sent a thrill

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of happiness through her heart. But when he arose to go, one might have beheld a slight pallor about his mouth ; yet the good-by was firmly, gently spoken.

It was well May Aubrey's glance followed not the form which bowed so feebly as the minister passed down the lawn, or the sorrowful eyes that once only turned back to the cottage.

May Aubrey was with the Vernons in town. She had been there several days. Her lover had met her with exceeding joy ; he was more devoted, more eloquent in his adoration, than ever, for the face of May was radiant in its beauty, no longer dimmed by sorrow ; and the troubled, anxious expression with which Annie watched them together at first disappeared.

Early one evening the two girls were in Annie's dressing-room, into which the sleeping apartment of each opened, and Annie Vernon stood by May's side, smoothing her dark hair, and winding it in rich waves about her head.

They were expecting a small circle of friends that evening, and May knew that the coming of one would bring joy to her companion's heart. Frank had been telling her of the expected guest, and the near connection existing between him and his sister, when Annie herself had interrupted their tête-à-tête, unconscious of its import, to hasten May's toilet for the evening. There was a deeper color upon her cheek as she stood by May, a joyous light flashing out from beneath her drooping lashes. Once or twice her lips parted, as though she fain would speak, and then a deeper color flitted over her cheek. But at length, when the last band of hair was adjusted, she bent down, whispering within her companion's ear, as though unwilling to give voice to her words, "May, I have not been true with you."

"I know it, dear Annie ; Frank has been telling me all about it," answered May, sympathizingly. "But I shall not be content, my beloved Annie, if you keep any sorrow that may come to you from me, as you have your joy." Annie's lip was tremulous with emotion, and her blue eyes were glistening with tears of happiness.

May saw how her spirit was moved, and she said, with a gay smile, "But all this time you are keeping me in ignorance, dear Annie, of who

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it is that has been making such a commotion in this glad, light heart of yours."

"Robert Etherell. I fancied I had told you."

"Robert Etherell!" repeated May Aubrey, sinking down upon a chair, very white and trembling. "No, Annie, no, no, not him, — the base, false villain! No, Annie, God forbid!"

And now it was Annie Vernon's turn to grow pale and tremble, while she stood gazing wildly, incredulously, upon May. Then a deep, fiery glow shot over her fair, childish face; she raised herself coldly, haughtily erect, while her blue eyes flashed passionately down upon May. But there was no trace of pride or anger on her companion's countenance even when she answered "It is false, false, May Aubrey!" But she threw her arms about her, made her sit down by her, and told her all in her excitement, all that she herself knew, never noticing the varying expressions sweeping over that hitherto happy young face.

Even while she spoke, the murmur of voices from below told of the circle which was gathering in the drawing-room, and at length Mr. Vernon himself sent up to know why they came not.

I am going down, May," said Annie, at last, rising, "going to see — see him; you also must, — perhaps, after all, he is not the one you speak of," and a gleam of hope shot over her pallid face.

"O, Annie, that it may not be! that you may be spared!" prayed May, sorrowfully, fervently, as she left her.

Half way down the stairway, Annie Vernon paused and grasped the balustrade for support; for all her strength seemed to be passing away. As she stood there, the drawing-room door opened, and her eye fell upon a group standing beneath the light of the chandelier, her lover conspicuous amid the rest. He was glancing impatiently towards the opening door, and caught a glimpse of her, and stepped forward. The slight, childish figure, in its rich dress, stood bending over the balustrade, looking down upon him sorrowfully, questioningly. "Annie," he said, in a voice very low and sweet. Bird-like she glided down to his side, and, drawing her hand within his arm, he led her in, questioning her why she was so slow to welcome him. She looked up, trembling and paling again, and once more his smile dashed the dark, doubting thought of him from her heart.

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Her aunt Mary, her father's sister, who lived with them, and did the honors of their city home, had received their guests; and, with a few brief words, on her lover's arm, Annie joined the waltzers. With the music stealing melodiously on her ear, in the lighted, luxurious saloon, in the sunshine of the smile beaming upon her, she banished the thought of that which, in truth, lay heavy at her heart. While Annie was waltzing with Robert Etherell, Frank Vernon came in.

"Is Miss Aubrey in the drawing-room?" he questioned of the footman in the hall.

"She has not come down yet," answered the man; "but Miss Vernon has just gone in, sir."

Frank Vernon's face was flushed, and there was a more than ordinary impatience in his manner. Instead of entering the drawing-room, he passed on to the library, and there a long time he paced to and fro, with a downcast glance, and stern, dark expression upon his handsome face, plunged in some deep and apparently troubled revery. "It must be; there is no alternative!" he said, half aloud, at length, pausing midway in the room. "*It must be!*" and the gloom gave way to a cold, stony expression, that made his countenance, with all its manly beauty, dark and forbidding in the extreme. Once more he went into the hall, and again he questioned the servant, as before, and again he replied in the negative; while, turning short round, with a quick, resolute step, he ascended to his sister's dressing-room. The footman, all the while, was watching him earnestly, under an air of respectful unobtrusiveness; and, as his step fell in the hall above, he crept stealthily to the stair, listening to the receding step of his master; he heard him tap softly, then a door opened and closed, and he turned away, with a half-sneering laugh on his lip.

When Annie left, May, instead of following her, threw herself upon the rug before the fire, and, resting her head on the cushions of a chair, began to weep. The music stole up gayly from below; but it only mocked her aching heart,—aching for her friend, and heavy with a vague feeling of personal sorrow. The many trials which she had been called upon to endure memory recalled; even Frank Vernon's love began to seem to her, desponding, despairing as she was, less reliable. She recalled Robert Etherell's letters of love, which she had read, to her

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dead sister; and the music falling on his gay ear was stealing by to her, the sister of the victim of his falsehood. Her cheek burned with indignation; all the passionate impulses of her spirit were aroused; she longed to confront him, before all present, and wither him with her scorn.

She arose to go down, and a storm of passionate indignation was rising in her bosom, wild and uncontrollable as when, years before, a child, she turned upon the boy-rebel by the roadside; and just then Frank Vernon entered. It was something entirely new for him to present himself there, but May Aubrey forgot all ceremony. Frank, her promised husband, was before her, — he whom she loved with all the fervor of her impassioned nature. There was something of dismay in his expression, as he looked upon her, for he fancied, at first, that she was indignant at his intrusion there, knowing, as he did himself, full well the impropriety of the act. But May Aubrey's manner undeceived him; his presence calmed, instantaneously, the passion of the moment. He drew her to a seat, and, encircling her with his arm, listened quietly, attentively, to all she had to say; but, all the while, there was an expression of exultation deepening in his eye, with the passion which was beaming there, while, listening to her words, he gazed upon the beautiful, artless face by his side. For all this expressed indignation at the base conduct of Robert Etherell, — for all his gentle words to that lone, confiding girl, — a minute observer of Frank Vernon could have perceived that he felt no sorrow, no regret, in his heart, for what May Aubrey told him; rather that it, in a measure, afforded him relief and satisfaction, as though he obtained a clue towards the attainment of some ardently-desired object.

Hours passed on; the evening wore rapidly away; so rapidly that May looked up in surprise when the clock struck eleven. Then, for the first time, there flashed over her a suspicion as to whether it would be thought proper for even her acknowledged lover to pass the entire evening alone in her dressing-room; but her confidence in him reässured her, though still she wished that he would go. But he moved not, until Annie's step was heard, coming up the stairs, and approaching; then he sprang up, with a well-assumed air of consternation. Perhaps he did not think it was his sister; for it was a slower, heavier step than hers was wont to be. But, when the door opened, and she paused upon the

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threshold, he appeared yet more distressed, glancing at May with a troubled look, as though pained for her sake. But there was no shrinking, no trembling there, beneath the searching scrutiny of the blue, cold eyes bent upon her, no deepening color upon May Aubrey's cheek; calm, serene, only with a slight shade of sadness on her sweet, young face, she met the haughty glance of Annie Vernon. Her brother attempted to greet her with a gay word; she frowned darkly, opened wide the dressing-room door, which she had closed behind, answering, coldly, "It is a late hour for even you, my brother, to be here!" and closed it upon him as he passed out. He frowned upon her, in seeming anger; but he smiled when the closing door hid him from their view.

"Annie," said May, softly, for she did not understand her; she thought she was angry with her for what she had told her of Robert Etherell.

"I am very tired, and my head is aching; good-night," she answered faintly; and, opening the door, passed on to her own sleeping-chamber. Had she said her heart was aching, she would have spoken more truly; for it was aching as it had never done before.

Repulsed so bitterly, so coldly, May Aubrey stood gazing upon the door through which she had disappeared, as one scarcely able to comprehend what was passing; but, after a while, it grew more clear to her, though still she did not fully understand why Annie had spoken so harshly to Frank; but she realized enough to make her very miserable. She was becoming bitterly disappointed in her love for Annie. She did not know that Annie also was weeping as sorrowfully as herself.

Once she half arose, to go to Annie; had she done so, it would have been well; but pride checked the frank, confiding impulse. At her own home she would not have hesitated; but she was there a guest,—she could not intrude upon even Frank's sister. Something of bitterness mingled with her sadness; she glanced haughtily around the luxurious room, as though, in her heart, she was spurning its splendor, its luxuries. She thought she would not suffer herself to weep; but she did, when she retired to rest, long, long and sadly; until, exhausted with grief, she slept, so profoundly and wearedly, that she awoke not when the sunbeams, in their brightness, stole even through the voluminous folds of the rich curtains shrouding her casements.

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But Annie had awoke, and rang for her maid, even earlier than usual; for she was restless, and less unhappy than the previous night. She was not one long to retain anger or distrust.

"Has Miss Aubrey left her room yet, Lizette?" she questioned of the girl, as she was dressing her hair. She was a young French woman, whom Annie had brought home with her from Paris, and whom she placed much confidence in; for she was ever cheerful, and seemingly much attached to her young mistress.

"No," she answered; "I have not heard her moving yet. She is very quiet; sleeping yet, if she is there, mademoiselle."

"What do you mean, Lizette? You tell me first that Miss Aubrey has not left her room, and end by intimating that she may have done so. Have a care, Lizette, have a care! you were over-communicative last night;" and there was an unwonted sternness in Annie Vernon's voice. But the girl betrayed no embarrassment, answering, very meekly,

"I am sure I thought no harm; and you looked so eager-like, mademoiselle, that I thought you wanted to know what Dickson told me; but I will repeat no more he may say."

"See you do not, Lizette! and, moreover, if Dickson keeps a watch upon his master's conduct, he shall be duly informed of the fact."

"O, Mademoiselle Annie! I conjure, I entreat of you not to do so! it would break my heart! All for my silly prattle, if poor Dickson loses his place. O, do not speak of it to Mr. Frank! I will stake my life on his fidelity."

"Hush, Lizette! Be quiet!—you weary me with all this noise; only let me hear *no more of this!*" and the young French woman promised implicit obedience, with tearful eyes. Annie Vernon was not strong enough to resist tears, but, pardoning, sent her away. She did not see the angry, revengeful expression which stole over her countenance, and with which she glanced towards May's chamber. But, when she disappeared, she arose, and herself passed on, and entered May Aubrey's room. The curtains still hung motionless about the couch; but a fold was gathered back, and she stole softly up on tiptoe to her side.

There was no flush of passion or sorrow on that sleeping face; it was calm, exquisite, in its beautiful repose. The arms could have never rested so quietly, in their folded attitude, over her bosom, had the heart

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beneath throbbed unholily. There was no glow of undue passion staining the fair, white brow; and Annie bent down to awaken her with a loving kiss. But a shadow stole over her face, her lip curled, and she murmured, "Not Robert Etherell, Frank!" and Annie turned round hastily, and went out.

When they met at breakfast, her manner was changed; it was courteous, but not winning, affectionate, as its wont. May was pale, and her eyes were dim, as though a tear-drop clouded them; but Frank was unusually cheerful, and his gay words covered their reserve; while Mr. Vernon took no note of either, as he read the morning papers, and Aunt Mary busied herself making coffee for them.

"Frank," whispered May, entreatingly, as they rose from the breakfast-table, "come into the conservatory. I want to speak with you. I would like to go home, Frank."

They had gained the conservatory, and the bright sunlight, pouring in, showed her to him, pale, tearful. There was a large garden-chair standing within the shadow of an orange-tree; and he led her to it, and, seating himself before her, said, thoughtfully,

"You would go away because Annie is angry with you for what you have told her of her lover; because the erring little gypsy chills your warm, loving heart, beyond even my power to relieve. Dear May, is it not so?" The tears fell upon the hand which stretched out and clasped her own. "You would go back to the cottage because they are cold to you here, my beautiful! you rebel, as yonder bird, who beats its wing hard upon the silver wires of his cage. Its mate died last week, for they are wild birds of the forest; it could not bear the prison-home which we gave it. Had it yielded to its destiny, it would have been warbling joyously in the sunshine. Be not like the prisoned bird, darling,—yield to *thy destiny!* I will be your pilot, guarding you from danger. Yield to my knowledge, my will, and, O! my wild-flower, drooping beneath the frosty blight of the world, the genial rays of love and tenderness shall rescue thee!"

She looked at him, uncertain, soothed, but not comprehending him. He drew nearer to her, until the whole glory of those large blue eyes was shining into her own. He held the little white hands firmer; he spoke

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in tones which the magnificent mocking-bird, with all its varied notes of melody, could not imitate in their music.

"There is a shadow on your heart, May; there is a cloud, dark, heavy, on my own. For the first time in life, my tongue lacks words to express a knowledge which has intruded itself upon me. May, don't look upon me so calm, so serene! They tell me I must never marry you!" — a long, deep, breathless pause, with the color fading from her face; — "it is not I, but they, who say it; *they* are cold, pitiless, May!"

"Yes, Frank."

It was a mere statue that spoke, that rose and stood erect before him; for there was no life stirring about the heart, to give impulse to a retreating step. A crushing weight was upon it, a sudden blow stunned it; there was a faint sigh, however, giving token of its being. He grew alarmed; it was not what he had anticipated. He roused all the art, the subtle power, within him, to conquer.

"No, May," and he put her back, with his strong hand, from where she had risen. "*It is not 'yes,' — it shall never be*, while you love me; and I still trust you do, for all your passive acquiescence in their will. But you must learn — they, also, must — that a mightier one than their own confronts them; — a will to which thou, May, in thy sweet confidence and gentleness, shalt bow; for it is one that shall hold to my heart you, the treasure, for all eternity, which I have won. There are, it is true, worldly reasons why we should part; they are mighty; but a more omnipotent, because a more heavenly one, why we should not. May, you must become my wife, beyond the power of fate to prevent, before you go back to Deerville."

The color which had faded glowed deeper than crimson on the cheek of his mute listener, while pride filled the glance looking into his.

"Never, Frank Vernon! What! I, — I, May Aubrey, — ask a father unwilling to receive me; crave a sister's love, withdrawn; enter a home the portals of which would fain be closed against the poor orphan girl; creep into luxury through your love! No! suffer me to leave you; no longer your attitude becomes you. If I am too poor for your wife, I am too proud to be trifled with!" and she would have left him; but once more he put her back. Again he spoke, more sadly, but more firmly.

"*You must* become my wife, May! Your confidence in me, and my

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thoughtlessness, have injured you. There are whispers afloat which must be silenced."

Her lips curled in irrepressible scorn, and he found that he was losing ground in the dark game which he was playing. But, secure in her love, he did not despair; only started up, and clasped his hands, as though his own anxiety and her obduracy half maddened him.

"May," he continued, in a voice in which there blended something of bitterness with its despair, "you, whom I have looked upon as the one ray of sunshine streaming over the pathway of my life, which was to dissipate every cloud, have become suddenly my greatest trial."

"Thy trial, Frank! O, no; I will go away; you shall put all remembrance of me from you; you shall forget me. Nothing but the old cottage and Judith shall henceforth know May Aubrey. The very wind shall not hear her voice, nor the sunlight shine upon her, until it be to waken the flowers on her grave, so that thou but take that back. Not thy trial, Frank!" and she looked up to him pleadingly, but most lovely even in her deep woe. He had conquered,— he read it in her despair; and the only task left him was to soothe. And he did so; skilfully weaving his love-words with his dark insinuations, confessing boldly a secret embarrassment which held him dependent for a time on his father's will, which it would be ruin for him at that time to oppose, urging, all the while, the necessity of a secret, speedy marriage, until she became half alarmed lest her own obduracy should bring some trial upon him, a vague, undefinable presentiment of which his manner conjured up. He declared even his own faith to herself, and consequently all his future happiness, would be perilled, if she refused compliance with his wishes; and, at length, he won her, not to consent, but no longer to oppose him. He gave her no time to reflect, but besought her to put on her hat and walk with him, that the clear morning air might revive her. When she entered the dressing-room, she found Annie there, reading. She glanced up, and May told her she was going out with Frank. "You are not well, May; you are looking too ill to walk. I will ring for the carriage; a drive will do you good," she said, kindly. A tear stole down her companion's cheek, and Annie went up to her, put her arm about her, and kissed it away.

The gentle, forgiving caress touched May's heart; she burst into a

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passionate shower of tears. Grieved, remorse-stricken Annie endeavored to soothe her, but the effort was vain. She continued to weep, until, wondering at her delay, her lover sent up to hasten her.

When May left him, Frank Vernon had summoned Dickson, the footman, to his presence, speaking with him hurriedly and earnestly, and the man went out immediately to execute his bidding. About two hours afterwards, just as the various clocks of the city were striking the mid-day hour, mingling with the hoarse murmur of the many vehicles thundering over the pavements and reverberating through the air, two figures stood before a clergyman, in an Episcopal church, in the heart of the city.

One was Frank Vernon, enveloped in a large cloak, with his hat drawn low over his brow; and, clinging to his arm, with her veil shrouding her face, very pale and anxious in its expression, May Aubrey, half fainting, with the murmur without nearly drowning the clergyman's voice. She was unconscious that he omitted a portion of her name. She ever was. The ceremony was concluded, the certificate of their marriage made out, registered and signed, by the two witnesses present, one of whom was the man Dickson, but who, in her agitation, passed unrecognized.

No certificate was given to her, but she did not notice the omission. A carriage was awaiting them, on their exit from the church, and he placed her therein, seating himself by her side, and ordered the coachman to drive out towards Bloomingdale, in order to give her time to compose herself, drew up the blinds, and turned to her. She had sunk far back in a corner of the carriage. He raised her veil; her cheek was white, her lips colorless. But the sweet, holy name for the first time falling on her ear, recalled her, — "My May, my wife!" She ceased to mourn, — to tremble at the part which she had unwittingly played. A flash of joy passed over her spirit, a confidence such as she had never before felt; a bond was woven about her dear even in its tyranny. She bowed her head upon her husband's shoulder, and smiled up to him as he whispered his joy.

But, when the carriage drew up before his home, and his injunction of secrecy explained to her that still his home was not her home, — that she, the proud one, who had never stooped even to loved ones, who had never previously harbored a thought in her bosom that she would blush

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with shame to reveal, who had ever spurned falsehood and deception, was about to steal in beneath the roof which had received her, to dupe those who had welcomed her in her lowliness, and given her their loving protection, — did she realize how difficult was the task before her.

To her conscious spirit it appeared as though the very servant who opened the door to them looked upon her suspiciously. And when she gained her own chamber, and heard Annie enter the dressing-room beyond, instead of going forward to meet her, she sank down upon a chair, trembling and faint, striving to collect herself.

What a strange bridal seemed hers! Like a wild dream it began to appear; but she glanced down on the ring which encircled her finger, and smiled softly as memory echoed the words with which it had been placed thereon. She endeavored to recall the ceremony, but the effort was futile. She only knew that she had become a wife; a sweet and holy word, thrilling her spirit o'er and o'er.

But she felt very lonely; for there were none to bless her, the young bride, and soothe her agitation. She went not, like most young girls, forth from a home of watchful care, with kind words to cheer her on her pilgrimage of love; no loving words to soothe her agitation, — not even her husband's. Him she must meet with the calmness of only his betrothed. She could not look up to him for encouragement but in secret. And very little she looked like a bride, in her black dress, with her pale cheeks and troubled air. But a low knock on the door of her room broke upon her reveries, and Annie Vernon entered, to ask if she was not ready for dinner. She blushed deeply, and her manner was embarrassed, as she pleaded fatigue and a severe headache. She dared not go down, lest her emotion should betray her; and once more, sorrowful and anxious, Annie left her.

That night, for the first time, she saw Robert Etherell, and he looked little older than the miniature of him which had been given to Ellen. She regarded him earnestly, but not scornfully or passionately; for her heart was heavy, full of deep, unconquerable sadness. Only a yet deeper thrill of woe stole over her heart, as she sat there, in the lighted drawing-room, with her eyes bent upon him. Frank had gone out on business, he had told her. Mr. Vernon was playing chess with his sister in the front drawing-room, and Annie was seated at the piano, singing

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to them, while Robert Etherell sat on an ottoman by her side, facing May. There had been no excitement in her friend's manner; she had perceived no embarrassment in her lover when they met, for he turned aside his face to hide the flush that, in despite of himself, stole over it; and something of happiness and hope stole over her. But, as she sang, olden memories stirred in May's bosom; she pictured, involuntarily, Ellen in other years, with Robert Etherell by her side; and then came the recollection of her death-bed. And all the while, as Annie played, and the music fell upon his ear, as one fascinated Robert Etherell gazed into those dark, lustrous eyes before him.

He never forgot that sweet, sorrowful young face. Then it conjured up the memory of his early love, — the only one he had ever loved besides Annie Vernon,— and his heart grew heavy with remorse; for he was not cruel, heartless, only worldly and selfish; but, as he looked, tears stole out and dimmed their beauty, the beautiful mouth became convulsed, she murmured "Ellen," faintly, wildly, and fell upon the soft carpet. Had a dagger struck to his heart Robert Etherell could not have started with a deeper expression of pain than when that long-silent name fell upon his ear. He sprang forward, raised the unconscious one gently, tenderly, and she was borne to her room. When she revived, Annie was by her side, tearful and anxious; but she attributed her fainting to the heat of the room, besought her to leave her, and Annie reluctantly obeyed.

The following day May looked ill and feverish, but professed herself well; still she shunned all society until evening. Then she told Annie that she must leave them, go back to Deerville; and when Annie questioned her why she would go, she referred her to Frank.

But, notwithstanding all her late estrangement, and the embarrassment which she felt concerning Robert Etherell, whom, in her heart, she still endeavored to believe worthy, but whom she dared not question of his past history, lest she should, beyond all doubt, be convinced of his baseness, and which she yet lacked strength to bear, she was surprised and grieved at May's resolution. Her friend's agitated manner, her suddenly-conceived project of departure, she began to credit to Frank's account, more than her own past coldness. She felt that May must have discovered that which she had in the early autumn herself suspected, and which

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had recently again forced itself upon her; and yet May exhibited no symptoms of such anguish as she would have anticipated subsequent on such a discovery. She became puzzled,— indescribably distressed; but she determined to be frank with her.

"May," she asked, timidly, fearful lest she should awaken some sudden burst of smothered misery, "does Frank know — does he consent to your leaving us?"

"Yes, Annie," she answered, but with averted face; and her companion trembled, for she felt that young face must be pallid with anguish, and she yet loved her too sincerely not to sorrow in her sorrow.

"May," she whispered, tearfully, "if there is suffering in your heart, share it with me;— let me comfort you. O May, forget my doubts, my coldness! — turn to me, beloved, in your unhappiness. It is you that he still loves;— not Ruth Etherell. It is her brilliant position which dazzles him; the relief her fortune would bring him, in his embarrassments. His own heart would bleed at the sacrifice."

The averted face turned slowly round to her. There was no misery there; only a wondering, incredulous smile, as she said, "The sacrifice, — Ruth Etherell! What do you mean, dear Annie?"

The girl began to think her unconscious of what she was saying. A doubt as to her sanity flashed over her. She put her arm about her, answering softly, "Never mind; nothing, darling."

"Yes; but you do mean something, Annie. You are wrong; Frank still loves me."

"Yes, May —"

"And he would not, could not, marry Ruth Etherell, or any other woman."

"Perhaps not, May," more soothingly, but slightly doubting, Annie now spoke.

"Why do you look at me so, love? I need no pity;— only love, sympathy, and confidence. Don't keep it from me! I have been thinking falsely of you, of late. Now I take it all back, asking only your forgiveness and your trust, let come what may."

"You have it, May. It shall never be withdrawn;" and she sealed her words with a kiss of love. "But are you happy?" she questioned, still anxious, although the vague doubt of May's sanity passed away.

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"Very happy, darling, now, although there are some light mists glancing over the surface yet;" and she looked so bright and radiant, as she spoke, that Annie could not doubt it, although still sorely puzzled.

"Then you will not go back to Deerville yet, now all this idle misunderstanding is removed?" she questioned.

Something of seriousness came over the young wife's countenance. She stood a moment, as one in troubled thought.

"Yes," she answered, at last; "there are reasons why I must, — which render it necessary for me,— why I cannot remain here at present. Forgive all this mystery, Annie. Were the power mine, I would gladly be open with you. Do not question me, for I cannot impart to you the knowledge in my own heart."

And Annie complied with her request; — was gentle, and considerate of her feelings, screening her from all observations. But just before May left, with a mighty effort she conquered the weakness of her heart, and for the first time spoke of Robert Etherell. But her cheek was pale, her blue eyes dim. "Before I part with him, — take from my heart, May, the love there rooted with so many fair hopes, — I would pause, I would be very confident of the right; — will it be too much to ask to see, myself, his letters to Ellen?"

"I will send them to you, Annie," answered May. It was all she could say. She could neither comfort nor advise her.

The night after May went back to Deerville, Frank Vernon was seated alone with his father in the library. Hard words had passed between them; for, with all his love for his son, the knowledge of his selfishness was forcing itself upon him. He sat looking steadily upon him, and his glance was troubled, his cheek pale; but, as he spoke, a line of stern determination became perceptible about his mouth, and his voice was passionate, though low. "Once, and for all, Frank, I tell you that I will not give it to you! It is impossible. You have already drained me deeply. Your word of honor is broken;— your promises are idle. I will not beggar Annie, that I may minister to your vice and villany; for, by Heaven, it is dark, damnable villany, in you, to seek to take from her!" and in great agitation Mr. Vernon arose and went out. His listener's face was also pale, but for the deep, hot glow upon his cheek; and something like a smothered oath escaped him, as he sprang up and

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— as his wont in passion or perplexity — paced to and fro, with rapid steps. Once more from his dark and troubled thoughts was born the base resolve, and again he murmured sternly, "It must be!" Just then the hall-bell rang violently, and a man was shown into his presence;— a tall, dark-looking person, in the garb of a sailor, but strikingly handsome, for all his assumed roughness and recklessness of manner. "I have come, Mr. Vernon, once more, for my due; and have it I must. I cannot stay here in New York."

There was smothered passion in his voice, and his dark eyes flashed and burnt, as they rested on the fair, aristocratic countenance before him. He had not removed his cap, and the young gentleman motioned him haughtily to stand uncovered before him. He complied, but it was like the tiger retreating for its deadly spring; and then the terrible haggardness of his face was revealed.

With a well-assumed air of composure, Frank Vernon threw himself into an arm-chair before the fire, placed one foot leisurely upon the fender, and running his long, white fingers through his hair, raised his eyes to the wild, stormy countenance of his visitor. But in the clear, cold depths of those blue eyes, there was no ray of passion;— they gave no token of the strife within. "You will have to wait a while longer, Dick. A few weeks will matter little to you."

"But I tell you I neither can nor will wait; and you, by the Lord who made me, shall not sit and smile serene upon me!"

"Give her up, Dick. You have already spent time enough in search of her; and after all you will find her married."

But, as Frank Vernon spoke, he shunned instead of meeting the eyes of Richard Knox, whose limbs trembled with the sudden violence of his passion beneath him, and who, advancing a step, murmured hoarsely, with outstretched and clenched hand, "*Married?*— curse you, villain!"

Frank Vernon bent slightly forward, and lifted the soft, wavy hair shading his left temple, while the light falling thereon revealed a deep, large scar. It was not the first time that significant act had conquered the stubborn will, subdued the fierce passion, of the sailor; but now he quailed not, for a wrong had been done him which no past deed of generosity could expiate. The very act of Frank Vernon served all the more to exasperate him. Yet his voice was low, though bitter in its

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intonation in the extreme. "You would thrust upon me the remembrance of the boy's life you saved!" he commenced; — "the recollection that it was you who caught the furious, maddened horse, but a stone's throw from the child playing before its mother's door. It is needless. I have not forgotten it. Had I done so, you breathed not, you moved not, on earth, this day. But you took good care, when you tyrannized over me, that I should not, and I bore it all for the sake of that rescued boy, — my only brother. You made me your tool, Frank Vernon; and I was submissive because my heart was yearning towards that fair-haired child in heaven, and all who had been good to him I was ready to worship; but"— and now Richard Knox's brow became terrible with repressed rage, — "now you have done that for which, though you saved all mankind, you could not atone. You played well your part, Mr. Frank Vernon. You were very thoughtful for the poor companion of your youth, when you sent him forth on the long, profitable voyage which was to fill his purse, that you might steal in, in his absence, and win her who was dearer to him than life to her dishonor. But the boy has returned a man; he has found the beautiful creation of the hand of his God in ruins; —*found her married;* ay, yes, *married to shame and misery!* O God, Bessie!" his voice was still low, but terrible in its agony. He leant upon the mantel-piece, reduced for a moment to infantile weakness. Large drops of perspiration stood upon his brow; his glance was bent upon the carpet, in forgetfulness even of the presence of the destroyer of his peace. A slight movement upon his part recalled him. It had been far better for Frank Vernon, in that moment of absorbed grief, had he stolen away from the glance of Richard Knox, as he raised himself erect; for it haunted him ever afterwards. "I have looked upon the ruin; — hot tears have fallen upon it. I have looked upon the destroyer, and veiled my revenge, that I might wound him yet more deeply. The fruits of that prosperous voyage, which were to build Bessie Benson's happy home, and which *you*, making *her grave*, have saved, have bought the note which Raymond held against you. When last you lost, — when you came, flushed with wine, and staked, fool-hardy, your all, — you knew not that Richard Knox was your partner at the faro-table. Is there on earth another heart you have filled with as deadly a hate as looked out upon you from these eyes, through all that night's dis-

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guise? But I will have it all, — all, to your last penny! I will increase it! I will hoard it long, until the home I take from you, with a yet more luxurious life than you could have commanded ever, is mine. And then, when you are sore pressed, when your aristocratic spirit is bowed and crushed with poverty, when your ruin is consummated, come and look upon her who queens it here, — Bessie Benson's child and thine, knowing thee but to curse thee, — and the frail dying one is avenged; while Richard Knox, for the memory of the boy-angel above, takes not the life from your base, false bosom!" and, turning short round, without speaking another word, he left him in the handsome library, with its deeply-cushioned reading-chairs, and tiers of richly-bound volumes and beautiful statuary, looking out from shadowy alcoves and niches, like angel's faces, upon the startled man, there, alone, in that lofty apartment, consecrated to luxurious intellect. But his hitherto strong heart was faint, — faint with a vague presentiment of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Richard Knox, gone forth to raise, with his restless passion, a storm about him, which the warning which he had received might alone rescue him from. But he was conscious of the necessity of a will even more iron-like than it had ever been. No more falterings nor scruples. Resolute, daring, he must be henceforth. He rang the bell, and ordered Dickson to bring him wine; filled and refilled his goblet, until the pallor left his cheek; and he rose up, not delirious from its effect, but nerved to the worst, come what would. The plan which had all along been flitting through his mind became fixed there. With a gigantic effort, his will conceived the whole, dark and intricate as it was; and from that moment he never once faltered. Like some beautiful demon, he stood there, faintly smiling down into the dying embers on the hearth, full of triumphant exultation. But amid all the icy coldness, the terrible gloom, of that immortal soul, there was one warm beam, one faint ray of human tenderness. The thought of his young wife, — his bride of yesterday; a yearning to rest a moment from the strife by her was lurking in his bosom. A little while afterwards, scarcely an hour, dressed with elaborate care, he entered the opera-house, and levelled his glass at one conspicuous amid all there. For a moment he gazed, then a faint smile curled his lip; for the face of Ruth Etherell wore a shade of care, and her eyes drooped thoughtfully on the tiny gloved hand resting before her

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on the balustrade of the box. A crimson japonica was twined amid the waves of her black hair, and another nestled in the folds of delicate lace, shading the delicate bust.

It was not long before she glanced towards him; but she gave no token of recognition, only to stir the perfumed air with the gorgeous feathers of her fan, while the rich glow deepened on her cheek.

There was something exquisitely haughty in the young girl's bearing; for she did not look to be more than seventeen, notwithstanding all that perfect repose of manner and costly toilet; but she had learnt in early life to look below rather than above her, while her rare beauty and great wealth, when she appeared in society, taught her not forgetfulness of the lesson so early inculcated, that nature had been prodigal with her. The heart which throbbed beneath that satin robe was warm and generous. If there was undue pride, there were also many strong, deep and pure emotions. She was an orphan in childhood, and Robert Etherell, her half-brother, was her only guardian. He loved her with all a brother's love, for she came not between him and his ambition. To him the vast wealth she inherited from her mother she was lavish of, for he was her one idol; his will was law to her affectionate heart, but it had never thwarted her. He generally accompanied her when she went out, but that night he was not with her.

The moment Frank Vernon saw that she recognized him, he went round to her, and took his seat by her side, with the confidence of a lover. She smiled softly, and gave him her hand in welcome. He slightly pressed the little jewelled fingers, while she suffered it to rest a moment's space within his own. More glances wandered to them than to the prima donna filling the house with her sweet music; but they were both long accustomed to admiring glances, and heeded it not. He was permitted to fold her opera-cloak, of crimson cashmere, about her, and lead her to her carriage. As she crossed the pave, with assiduous care he gathered it yet closer, that no breath of the winter wind, sweeping up the street, might chill the beautiful child of affluence. Once more she smiled her bright heart-smile upon him, as he murmured his adieu. It was a cold night indeed. The sharp wind almost took away his breath, as he drew his own furred cloak about him, and turned down Broadway. He had not gone many rods before a man passed him, with

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rapid steps, turning as the rays from a lamp fell upon him, and addressed him. It was the servant Dickson, and together they passed on until they gained a street leading into a noisy and disreputable part of the city. The young gentleman muffled his face in his cloak, and the man, imitating his attempt at disguise, took off his hat, and withdrew the liveried band encircling it. At length they paused before a tall, half-ruined house, with lights glancing from many windows, and shouts of coarse laughter, mingling with shrill voices, breaking on the silence of night. A man, reeling through the lower entry, accosted them; but they took no notice of him, passing quickly up several flights of narrow stairs, until they gained the landing of the last, leading to the attic. A dim light fell through a chink in a closed door directly opposite, and now Dickson gave way to his master, whispering, "You can see them there, sir."

Frank Vernon bent cautiously down, and looked in; but only the fire blazing on the hearth was visible, and all was silent within. He turned round, and motioned the servant to go in. He obeyed him; but the next moment returned, and saying "The coast is clear, sir," Frank Vernon entered, leaving him to watch without. The room was low and small, but thick curtains shrouded the broken windows, and the blaze of the fire gave a cheerful look to the otherwise barren room. A coarse, low bed stood near the fire, but all there was white and neat in the extreme.

With wide-open eyes lay there the wreck of what had once been a joyous, beautiful girl, and on one slight, attenuated arm lay an infant of some two or three months old. It was pressed close to its mother's heart as it slept, while her long, dark curls half veiled its sunny brow.

The beautiful lustrous eyes, fixed on vacancy, were fearfully sunken, and her cheek was white as the pillow beneath her head. She scarcely breathed, and, but for those bright, watchful eyes, Frank Vernon would have thought her dead. He laid his hand gently upon her own as it clasped her child, and it was damp with the touch of death; but she smiled, and whispered his name, as, with sudden effort, she raised her head from her pillow. But when he would have taken the child from her, she murmured "No," and clasped it tighter, for a strange fear and dread of him came over her.

"Give it to me, Bessie; I will take good care of it," he said, quietly, yet authoritatively.

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But she covered its baby face with her wasted hand, for then she began to comprehend that he would take it from her, murmuring sorrowfully, agonizedly, "O, do not, Frank! I am dying! don't take her from me! I promised Dick that he should care for her. O, in mercy, Frank, O, don't take her from me!" But he unclasped the hand that held the infant, in despite of her prayer, and retreated with it to the door. There, with a faint, wailing cry, it awoke; and the mother sprang up with superhuman strength in the bed, but to fall back again upon her pillow, with a wild scream of agony, lifeless, never once breathing again.

The old woman whom Richard Knox had hired to nurse the mother and her child, and who lived on the floor below, went up, a little while afterwards, to those she had left sleeping quietly.

The mother lay lifeless and cold, and the child was gone. She comforted herself with the thought that the sailor must have been there and borne it away; and, calling up a woman from below to her assistance, they proceeded to lay out the dead mother.

The long, dark curls which Bessie, years before, in a garret-room, in the first hour of her ambition, had tossed, with proud consciousness of beauty, from her brow, they smoothed and wound thereon in death. But O, that then pure, fair brow had since burnt with shame, and clouded with misery; but now it was all over,—penitence and suffering had cleansed the spirit darkened by temptation and transgression. All the yearnings for the dear home of her childhood were over. The idol of the old farm-house at Deerville lay, robed for the grave, alone in that desolate garret, through the cold winter night; but the angel of death had softened the last agonized expression to one of angelic repose.

The following morning, Frank Vernon's carriage stood a long time before the stately residence of the Etherells, awaiting his coming; for he lingered in the drawing-room, yet not with Ruth Etherell, for she was slightly indisposed from a severe cold, and kept her dressing-room; but Robert Etherell had received him, and both were flushed and excited, for warm words had passed between them. The memory of the sweet face of May haunted Robert Etherell with the recollection of the past, and his heart was filled with remorse for the part which he himself had played in days gone by. He was firmly resolved to atone, if possible, for that past, by kindness to the lone girl. For the first time he alluded

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to Frank's attentions to his sister, and desired him to discontinue them; in his aroused goodness, he even threatened to impart to her all the knowledge which he himself possessed of his engagement to May, if he deserted her; and his listener well knew that the proud girl would spurn a love darkened by falsehood to another. But, even in May's love and confidence he held a chain which should bind the one who sought to aid her; the memory of the letters which she held in her possession flashed over him, and he grew confident of his triumph. With quick significance he alluded to them, and beheld Robert Etherell start with sudden anguish. Then he told him boldly that they were in his possession, and, moreover, that Annie should read them all, — every line that he had written to Ellen Aubrey, — if he betrayed him to Ruth. Then he glossed over his fierce, threatening words with a passionate declaration of love for her, while, in his moral weakness, his deep love of Annie Vernon, Robert Etherell yielded to the tempter, but not without a deep sense of shame, growing ever more bitter in his bosom. And so they parted, with that dark league between them.

But another task was before him, less difficult than the first, but yet not an easy one; and it required more time to execute it. Pleading business which called him from town, he went down to Deerville.

Even sooner than she had anticipated the young wife beheld him; and, O, how gentle and devoted he was in the brief time which he remained with her! How very easy it was for her to forget the humiliation of her position as a wife unrecognized, when his eloquent lips taught her the sweet lesson of love, which sufficed to banish all clouds from her heart! She was radiant in her joy; she laid aside the mourning which she had worn since the death of Mrs. Aubrey, and dressed herself with unwonted care and taste, that she might give him pleasure. For hours she would sing to him, lulling him with the sweet melody of her voice. She had never, in her whole life, been anything as happy; and wondered much why old Judith looked so troubled when, with a warm blush, she told her, under strict injunctions of silence, that she was married, — Mr. Vernon's wife, — growing half-angry with her that she questioned so earnestly as to why he could be anxious for it to be unknown, when he had for his bride a gentleman's daughter, as good as himself, after

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she had herself told her something, in her incoherent way, of weighty reasons for secrecy, and which she herself could not comprehend.

It was as beautiful as it was mournful to see how like a bride's she strove to fashion her dress; coming down to breakfast in her white cambric morning-gown, shivering, notwithstanding the huge fire the faithful servant kindled on the hearth, and glad to wrap herself in the crimson scarf which Frank folded about her, calling her his sweet, frail flower, shrinking beneath the winter blast. But there were times when, suddenly raising her eyes to his, she beheld them regarding her with an expression of pitying regret, as though conscious of some great sorrow hovering over her; and again his brow would be corroded with care and perplexity; but he would rouse himself so instantaneously from his troubled revery, so much more animated and gentle with her, that she would cease to remember it. One day he questioned her about Robert Etherell's letters, and it recalled to memory her promise to Annie, which, in her great joy and excitement, she had almost forgotten; and she gave them to him, to carry back to her.

When he left her, she was calm, serene, in her hopefulness of his speedy return; but she grew more thoughtful, sadder, after he was gone. As a cloud rolls over the sunlit sky, so stole a faint sorrow over her spirit, deepening day by day, apparently causeless, but not any the less imperceptible.

She grew languid; lost something of her strength, which she attributed to the extreme rigor of the winter; and all her husband's expressions of affection, in the long letters which he sent her during his prolonged absence, were requisite to cheer her. But he never once addressed her by the holy name of wife; in written words he never acknowledged the tie between them.

The spring came, with its bland breezes, while the cowslip blossomed in the meadows, and the sweet violets were losing their youthfulness, while the crocuses also bowed their golden heads. The inhabitants of Deerville had been busy for weeks, with their garden implements, amid their flower-beds; but there were no signs of any one stirring amid the shrubbery about Maple Cottage.

Early each morning old Judith appeared at the village post-office; and, when she bore a letter home with her, May would be seen bending

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eagerly out from an open window, as Judith held it up to view; but it was not very often that she returned thus laden. There were many who sought to question the faithful domestic concerning her young mistress, who sedulously concealed herself from all observation; but there was no gleaning anything from her; and all that could be ascertained in the village was that the girl's cheek had lost its rich bloom, and she looked ill in health. She had never been seen in the village after she came back from New York. A few had called upon her, on her return; but she denied herself to all visitors, and those who had called out of curiosity went away unsatisfied. Her engagement to young Vernon, which had been rumored in Deerville, began to be doubted; and no one was aware of his visit to her during the winter, so sedulously had he concealed it. There were many who entertained feelings of bitterness towards her for her refusal of the minister, — a refusal which they fancied dictated by worldly ambition.

Late in the winter, Harry Menton had obtained leave of absence, and, supplying the pulpit during his absence, had gone none knew whither, or for what purpose. But, at length, the villagers were startled by the news of Mr. Vernon's sudden death, followed by the arrival of the family with his remains, brought to Deerville for interment; and Robert Etherell accompanied his betrothed, who was to have been married to him during the very week of her father's death, which had suddenly and appallingly interrupted the bridal festivities in preparation. He had been taken ill with apoplexy, at a late hour one night, while conversing with his son alone in the library, and had never realized anything afterwards. He had been for a long time gradually failing, and something appeared to prey upon his mind, which they supposed must have been a presentiment of the ensuing change which is often supposed to precede an unexpected death. The funeral services were to take place, as in his will he had desired, at Deerville church, a beautiful Gothic edifice, which his father had erected and endowed; and he himself had contributed largely to its support. There were many regrets that Harry Menton, the rector, was not present to officiate; but his absence was still protracted, and none anticipated his return, until he arrived the very morning of the funeral. He was worn, as with sorrow and fatigue; for he had travelled all night to reach Deerville in season. It was in the first gray dawn of day that

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he passed the residence of the Vernons, the blinds of which were all closed, and the silver knob and heavy knocker of the hall-door shrouded in crape. All was silent, but for the faint twittering of the early birds amid the trees; and, rapt in deep and painful thought, he was close upon the cottage before he looked up; and then he started, and almost checked his horse, slow as he was riding, for a man closely muffled in a cloak came out from thence, and glanced around. When his eye fell upon the advancing figure of the clergyman, he retreated instantly, but not until he had recognized in him Frank Vernon. Then a sterner, darker expression than had ever before came over those placid features, and he rode on with a heart full of bitterness and pain.

When the long train of carriages began to move down the hill, and the waving of sable plumes told that the funeral procession was approaching the church, a figure dressed in deep mourning issued from the cottage, and hastened on with rapid steps. She had not proceeded many rods, however, before she was forced to pause and lift the heavy folds of her veil for air, and then the face of the young wife was revealed, but strangely changed; and yet not pallid, as from ill health, but with a deep, rich bloom upon either cheek, notwithstanding how very thin and wasted she had become. Her eyes were burning in their intense light and brilliancy, but her lip constantly quivered.

A young man was leaning against the stone wall which bordered the road, in a straw hat and sailor's dress. The expression on his brown, manly face was mournful in the extreme; and once or twice, as he had gazed in the direction of the cottage, a tear had trickled down his cheek, which he rubbed off with the coarse sleeve of his jacket. As the lady lifted her veil and paused, he looked earnestly upon her. She returned his glance with a slightly troubled expression, and passed on; but he followed her, and entered the church, pressing close to her side, although she did not notice him. She paused near the altar, leaning against a pillar not far from the mourners' seat, with folded arms and drooping veil.

The bell was tolling solemnly, and, as the remains of the dead man were brought in and placed before the altar, the organ pealed forth its solemn requiem for the departed. Slowly up the church's broad aisle came Frank Vernon, with the slight, erect figure of Ruth Etherell lean-

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ing upon his arm, in deep mourning, followed by Annie Vernon and Robert Etherell. Who was she that leant so confidingly upon that arm? what near relation existed between her husband and that beautiful young stranger, that she accepted, with such calm confidence, the right to mingle her tears with those of the son of the dead man? with a sharp pang the unacknowledged wife asked herself, as she put aside her shrouding veil, while her dark eyes flashed down upon the unconscious intruder. No one of the mourners noticed her, with the exception of Robert Etherell, who gazed pityingly and remorse-stricken upon her, during the whole beautiful and impressive service of the Episcopal church; and the rector himself, glancing at intervals towards her, with pale cheek and mournful expression; and one other, who had entered with the friends of the dead man, — a tall, foreign-looking person. When his eye first fell upon her, he started violently, and bent slightly forward, never once removing his glance from her. And one who had watched the two attentively would have perceived a striking resemblance between them, particularly in the contour of the stranger's face, which was strictly oval; and the eyes of both were alike dark, large and brilliant, as the gazer's grew more eloquent with feeling, and slightly hazy, as though tears, unsuffered to fall, dimmed their radiance, — and then the likeness between them became striking in the highest degree. But there were none present to notice it, although many were watching the young wife as she stood there, heedless of all present but her husband and the girl who sat there by his side, who, turning, at length, met her searching scrutiny, — at first, unmindful of it, but, after a while, growing impatient, restive, returning it with cold hauteur.

When the mourners arose to follow the body of the father borne before them to the grave-yard, back of the church, then, for the first time, the glance of Frank Vernon fell upon May. The start with which he recognized her was perceptible, and for the first time he frowned darkly, sternly, upon her. But all expression of anger faded into a deadly pallor, as his eye wandered to the erect form and caught the steady gaze of the sailor, standing not far off. He drew a long, deep breath, as though from his heart he sought to cast out a burden of oppressive fear, and passed on, Ruth Etherell by his side. The deserted wife leant heavily against the pillar by which she stood for support, trembling so violently

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that the stranger, left alone in the church with her, drew near and bent down, looking into her face, which was unnaturally pale, now that the bright color had faded, and her eyelids drooped.

"May!" whispered the sun-browned sailor. And she raised her eyes with a gleam of recognition.

"Willie!" she murmured, sinking upon a seat, tears gushing from her eyes. "Willie, is it thou?"

"Ay, May, Willie Benson. God bless you that you can remember the crushed and broken-hearted man!"

"Broken-hearted, Willie!" she questioned, forgetful of her own sorrow, as he bowed his head, covering his face, sobbing, — the strong man in the intensity of his suffering, — and she strove to comfort him. "Where is Bessie now, Willie? It is long since I have heard from her."

He raised his head, regarding her wonderingly, as though surprised that she was unconscious of what had past.

"In her grave!" he answered, sternly, rising up and standing erect, with the bright light of the approaching sunset streaming in upon his brown face and glistening blue eyes. "Dead and cold in her grave; and I am here to thank God that she is so, though I loved her, with all her waywardness; for her heart was warm, and she was the sister of my youth, who sat upon my mother's knee, with her kiss upon her innocent brow, and who knelt to our father's prayerful blessing. But that pure brow was darkened, and she who knelt the idol amid our household band, in the holy evening prayer, bowed and died in shame; and I, the brother of the heart-broken girl, have stood here, for the past hour, gazing upon the destroyer, striving hard to curse him not, while Harry Menton's voice, falling on my ear, recalled to my soul, now so dark and wild, the memory of my Creator. But, O God, May Aubrey, it has been a fierce, bitter struggle, to look upon him here, with the serene confidence of the proud girl by his side, mocking the suffering of the heart broken by him!" And once more Willie Benson bowed low his head. He had not beheld his companion's countenance, growing ever more white and appalling in its expression of horror as he spoke.

There was a momentary silence, broken only by the sailor's deep-drawn breath; then a hand clasped tightly his arm, and the white face bent down close to his own, whispering, hoarsely, "Which, Willie, which?"

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"Frank Vernon, — curse him!" came, at length, from the brother's lip, wrung from him in the bitterness of his spirit.

He felt his companion's head droop upon his shoulder, and, for the first time, discovered that she had fainted. He raised her in his arms, and bore her to the open door of the church, where the breeze revived her; but there was an unnatural gleam in her eye, and she desired to go home immediately.

Almost carrying her on his arm, Willie Benson bore her back to the cottage. But she did not ask him to enter, or to come again; yet, in his grief, he took no notice of her seeming neglect.

When the door closed upon him, she hurried up to her room. There was a sealed letter lying on her dressing-table; she took it up mechanically, broke the seal, and opened it. And now a deeper woe seemed to be stealing over her; she read it quite through, and suffered it to fall upon the carpet, while her whole countenance was rigid in its expression of intense suffering. But suddenly she started up, and her eyes flashed, her cheek glowed; she pushed aside the fallen letter with her foot. "It is not true! it is false!" she said, passionately; — "I not his wife? O God! what would he have me to be? *It was legal!* he shall not evade it! There was a church, a clergyman! It was binding, — it shall be! But they are tempting him; it is not Frank Vernon's own deed! His words are of sorrow and of love; he was not conscious; he has not done this knowingly," she murmured; and again she grew faint, and trembled, in her anguish and fear.

But again she roused herself, growing very firm and collected, as though a duty was before her, growing ever more clear and exacting of its performance by her.

She lighted a taper, took up the crushed letter upon the floor, — though her cheek burned, and she shivered as she touched it, — and held it in the flame until it was entirely consumed. Then she put on her hat, folded her shawl about her, and glided down the little circular staircase leading to the hall.

Old Judith was standing there, with a lighted lamp, which she was about to take into the parlor to her; for it was growing dark, although she had not noticed it. Its rays flashed over her young mistress' face, and she questioned her as to whether she was ill.

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"No, Judy," she answered hurriedly, and shrinking from the anxious scrutiny of her glance.

"But you look as though you had a fever, my darling young lady; and your hand is cold as ice," she replied, touching with her brown fingers tenderly the cold ones grasping the railing of the stairway. "Where are you going, Miss May, sick and alone, in the evening? It is little fit for a gentleman's daughter to go out in this way, like a bit of a serving-maid."

It was curious to listen to Judith, and mark how never once she alluded to May's station as a lady born in connection with any honor which the title of the bride of the rich man's son gave her.

"Why do you not say a gentleman's wife?" queried her young lady, suspiciously alive now to every neglect of her right to that title.

"Because, Mrs. May, your father was the greater gentleman."

Hitherto she had called her Miss May, as of old; but she now perceived that May had become suddenly sensitive, even with herself, upon the subject. Just then there was a low knock at the hall-door, and May stepped back into the parlor, with a faint gleam of joy; but it faded, and she shrank back, as the rector entered. It had been a great struggle with him to conquer his feelings, and go to her, after that which he had in the morning witnessed; but he felt that it was his duty to cast from his heart the memory of what she had been to him, and go to her in her misery. Her disappointment was evident to him; but it schooled him to yet greater firmness. She did not invite him to be seated; but, notwithstanding it, he drew a seat forward, and began to converse with her, not heeding her brief answers. He spoke of the death of Mr. Vernon; apparently the name moved her not. He had fancied she would shrink from its utterance by him. But when he alluded to the bridal festivities so appallingly interrupted, she glanced up questioningly.

"You are aware, are you not," he answered, "that Mr. Vernon was to have been married to the sister of Robert Etherell? She accompanied him to the church to-day."

Suddenly over the heart of his listener flashed all that she herself had witnessed; she began to comprehend it. She was gazing into Harry Menton's face, and she strove to turn away; for she began to fancy from her gaze thereon she was gleaning, every second, more anguish.

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But she could not turn aside; she struggled, as one in a nightmare, shuddered, and fell fainting in his arms. He raised her, laid her upon the sofa, and gazed upon her as one would upon a fallen angel. The beautiful face had lost its beauty to him; he had no desire to touch it with the lips of love. But when, reviving, she began to murmur of birds and flowers, and entreat to be carried out from the cold, damp forest, where, in her delirium, she fancied herself, into the warm sunshine, then the ice began to melt about his heart.

"Mother, darling," she whispered, "kiss me softly on my brow; it will not ache so!" But he turned away; for he would not have kissed her for all earth's joys. She felt it, although still dreaming him another, and added, sorrowfully, "You, too, turn from me, with all others; and no one will take me out from this cold place in the woods! Ah! if I only lay on Ellen's grave, with the sunshine streaming over me! Harry! Harry! will *you* not come for me? They are hastening through the woods, with more ice for my heart! Ah, if they would only bind it on my brain!"

"Father in heaven! in thy infinite mercy, comfort and soothe thy troubled child! O, pardon and pity this poor weak one!" prayed the rector, with his hand resting gently on that bowed head; and the girl lay silent, but for a faint whisper of delirious joy on her lips.

And he went out in search of Judith. She met him in the hall, and, before he could speak, laid her hand upon his arm, saying, "You are her old friend, and Mrs. Aubrey's, too; and have been so good and kind, bearing with all her little teasing ways so pleasantly, when you used to be here, until you were like one of us, sir, that I must tell you all, though it vex her, and she send me from her, breaking my heart.

"You see that when they persuaded her into going up to town with them, I was loth like to have her go; but she would not hear to old Judy, and went. She did not stay long, — not half the time she was to, — before she came back, all smiling and happy-like, but for a bit of a cloud that would come over her when she was alone long; and Mr. Frank followed her soon. She put on a white frock, — though it was the dead of winter, and very cold, — and called me up to her, asking me a great many things, such as never before came into her head, about making it cheerful-like here for Mr. Frank; and then, laughing, and blush-

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ing, and crying like a child, told me that she was his wife, — how he had married her at church in New York; but it was all to be kept secret for a little while, for some trouble of Mr. Frank's with the old gentleman.

"And she was so happy, like a bird, while he staid, that I could have blessed his bonny face, only that he should be afraid to own any one so beautiful and good, instead of being proud and grateful that she was his own lawful wife. And now, though he put her off last night, with his soft words, until the roses bloom on the lawn, I am afraid, unless there is a change, she will die before they open. And now the Lord forgive me that I have broken my sworn oath, even to you, sir, a Christian minister."

"But are you very sure she is his wife, Judith?" asked the rector, with much earnestness, but all the terrible sternness gone from his countenance.

"What else would she be?" retorted the woman, wroth even with him, a moment, for the doubt; but he took no notice of it, only to tell her how ill he had left her, and advise her to give her something soothing, and make her lie down; promising to call in the morning, early.

When he reached home, he found a gentleman awaiting him in his study. It was the stranger who had so closely watched May during the services at the church that day, and he announced himself as Raymond Churchill, long a resident in a foreign land, but recently returned. He had come to seek information concerning his young parishioner of the rector. He questioned him earnestly, appearing to be deeply interested in each minute detail concerning her, after having gleaned all that Harry Menton could impart of the early history of May, who gave full credence to his repeated assurances that his interest sprang from no idle curiosity.

"Did the possibility of Mrs. Aubrey's youngest child not being her own in reality ever suggest itself to you, Mr. Menton?" queried Mr. Churchill, anxiously.

"Never," answered the rector, promptly; and an expression of keen disappointment passed over the countenance of his visitor, while, for several moments, he appeared to be buried in deep and painful reflection. At length, looking up, he said,

"I am aware that this young girl of whom we speak is a near connection, if not a relative, of myself. I married a younger sister of the late

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Mrs. Aubrey, who died a little over a year subsequent to our marriage, immediately upon which I sailed for India, where I have remained until the last four weeks. In the mean time I have lost all trace of the Aubrey family, private difficulties having prevented all intercourse between us. The striking resemblance of this young lady to my deceased wife attracted my attention while attending the funeral services of my old friend, Mr. Vernon. Upon inquiry, I have learnt her name, and been referred to yourself; to the information you have given me I am indebted for the restoration of a niece, if not some one yet dearer;" here his voice faltered, and a tear-drop glistened on his cheek.

The agitation of Mr. Churchill, his apparent wealth, and courteousness of expression, notwithstanding his stateliness of manner, gave to Harry Menton a desire to impart to him, as a relative of the suffering girl, all that he himself knew, with a faint hope that he might prove to her a protector. After a brief hesitation, he did so. Mr. Churchill's brow darkened when he came to her clandestine marriage with young Vernon; but, so eloquently did he plead, in extenuation, her extreme youth, her loveliness, her goodness and purity of spirit, — so boldly did he avow his conviction of Frank Vernon's subtle villany, — that the frown raised by May's error changed to an expression of pity for her, of deep indignation against him. When he paused, his visitor gave him his hand, saying,

"You have done me a greater service than you are aware of. Henceforth she is no longer lone and friendless. I claim the right to shield her, and I have the power. In the morning I will accompany you to her. Good-night," and he left him.

For a long time Harry Menton remained buried in deep thought; but the weight which had so oppressed him during the day was removed; still May was to him the pure, sweet child of his care, the guileless love of his manhood. He chided himself that he had doubted her; his heart yearned to her, in her sorrow. He prayed God to shield and strengthen her, and his prayer was earnest and holy in its faith.

And, while the rector's thoughts were thus occupied, a far different scene was being enacted in the stately home on the hill's brow, which should have now owned her its mistress.

Ruth Etherell, with her cold ways, and air of haughty pride, veiling the warm, passionate heart throbbing beneath all the worldly restraint

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which she imposed upon herself, had retired early to her room, while Annie Vernon remained alone, weeping her blue eyes dim with sorrow for the loss of the loving presence which she, for the first time in her young life, missed; and her brother and Robert Etherell were left alone in the drawing-room. The first-mentioned sat alone, gazing down upon the carpet, with folded arms and moody brow. As the light fell over him, deep-woven lines of care were visible on his handsome countenance. He had become pale and thin, and there was a haggard look about his large eyes. More than once he sighed, or, rather, breathed heavily, as though oppressed by care. His companion was pacing to and fro, with drooping head, but ever and anon looked up, bending a stern, scrutinizing glance upon Frank Vernon.

There seemed to be a strife, as of contending spirits, within his bosom; but, at length, his resolution was taken, and he gave himself no time to waver. Back into his heart he thrust the thought of Ruth's proud heart humbled; that would be all the bitterness he fancied there. But it was a yet harder thing to glance into the future, and picture the fair face of Annie Vernon from himself forever averted. But all the latent goodness of his heart had been wakened by the purity of his love for her; he had found it vain to attempt forgetfulness of a face, fairer even than Annie's, fading in the grave, for the faith which he had broken; and one which, in its suffering, had haunted him, since he looked upon it that day in the village church, rose up also to strengthen him.

"Mr. Vernon," he commenced, so abruptly that his companion sprang up, with a startled look, "I break the league between us. I cannot permit you to marry my sister, with the curse of May Aubrey's broken heart clinging to her union with you; she must know all."

"And Annie read Robert Etherell's letters to Ellen Aubrey, whose heart he wantonly broke. You do well to taunt me, sir, with a broken faith!" answered his companion, white and trembling with passion.

"If you will. No fear of suffering shall deter me, though this hour, on this resolve, my every hope of happiness is wrecked. Farewell all base falterings, all palterings to dishonor! You may as well seek to stem the mountain torrent in its course, as to deter me now, Frank Vernon!" He was pale, but firm; no effort could cause him to waver now.

They could hear the rushing of the wind without, bending the giant

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oaks to the white walls of that princely home, the fierce storm rising; but they heeded it not, for the spirit of one was dark in its hopelessness, the other full of passion fierce and almost uncontrollable as the tempest. He saw that all entreaties would be without avail, and, turning short round, went up to his room, and opening his desk, took out from thence the package which May had given to him, rang the bell, and ordered the servant to take it immediately to his sister, and request her to read the enclosed.

He threw himself into a seat, and strove to think calmly, for he was growing desperate. A half-formed resolution to take what he could, seek May, and persuade her to fly with him to Europe, came over him; for he was weary, and all looked dark ahead. But suddenly another plan was formed, and he grasped it instantaneously. Again he rang the bell; but now it was to send for Miss Etherell's maid, to ascertain if her mistress had retired. The girl answered in the negative, and he desired her to go to her, and beg her to see him, despite the lateness of the hour, on urgent business, in the library.

Once more he called for wine as he went down, and drank, but not deeply. He was not forced to wait long in suspense, for she came to him in her dressing-gown, with a shawl folded about her, but very beautiful even in the disarray of her toilet, and her black braids put back from her white brow, slightly pale from recent fatigue and excitement. Her lover had bowed his head upon the table before him; but, as her soft step fell upon the threshold, he arose, very pale, but calm, extended his hand and led her to a seat, but himself stood erect before her, as though he scorned all physical weakness on the part of manhood.

"Miss Etherell — Ruth — we must part!"

"How long, Frank?"

"Forever!" She gazed upon him incredulously for a moment, then, with a deeply-flushing cheek, arose, bowed, and crossed to the door. But he had no idea of permitting her thus to depart.

"Miss Etherell!" She turned to hear what more he would say, proudly but calmly, as though there were no interest between them. He had assumed an expression of intense grief, and seemed to dash aside a tear as she turned to him. That sufficed for Ruth Etherell. All the indifference disappeared instantly; she went up to him, laid her hand

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upon his arm, and gazing with her large dark eyes up into his, questioned, "What is the matter, Frank?"

"Your brother has withdrawn his consent to our marriage."

"Has he, indeed! What of that, Frank?"

"Because we must obey him!"

"*Obey!* Interpret the word, — it is unknown to Ruth Etherell!"

"It is derived of suffering, of humiliation. I would not teach you either, Ruth, for it is a bitter lesson to learn."

"Have you been taught it, Frank?"

"Yes, Ruth."

"Who was your teacher?"

"Your brother; and with bitter words he has impressed it on my memory. He deemed poverty brought to my spirit baseness; he has not paused to give me time to release you from your engagement to me — the poor man! It would have been less bitter, Ruth Etherell, to have voluntarily given you up with the dignity of an honorable man, than have suffered the ignominy of a command, borne for the sake of the tie existing between yourself and him who gave it." He spoke with deep pride and bitterness; and, all the while, his listener's glance flashed brighter and brighter, while the color grew deeper on her cheek. She had almost exclaimed, as he alluded to his poverty, "I have enough, — what if you are poor, Frank!" but, with intuitive delicacy, she checked herself, answering only, "I ask not wealth, — only affection, Frank." She spoke softly, and drew a step nearer to him. He averted his face, but not coldly, mournfully. Blushing deeply at her own boldness, she raised her hand, and gently turned it towards him. "I have loved Robert, Frank, but not as I do you. Still, I will go to him, and tell him that, from this hour, I cast out all affection for him from my heart. I will never again see him; never pardon him that he has wounded you thus, who are more good and noble than he can conceive of. — He command you! He dictate to me!" and, in her excitement and scorn, she laughed aloud. A low, soft voice, a clear, tearful inquiry, answered her; a light figure glided past, all in white, with dark, flowing hair, and, with a shriller laugh than her own, nestled in the arms of Frank Vernon, clinging to him when he strove to put her back, and gazing up into his face with such a strange, wild, pleading expression, that he lost all courage to turn

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away. Then she began to talk very fast and incoherently, and beg him not to send her from him. Her dress was wet, and her falling hair also glittering with the heavy rain-drops. She shivered and trembled like a leaf; but her eyes were bright, and her cheeks burning.

"May," he whispered, softly, with a sudden thrill of fear and anguish, unsubdued even by the presence of Ruth Etherell. The beautiful face nestled closer to his bosom, and still smiled up to him, but unconsciously, it was evident.

"Who is this, Frank?" asked a stern, low voice, very unlike the previous musical tones in which she had spoken to him.

"My wife," he answered, fiercely, looking down upon the cold, white face of his questioner.

"Thy wife, — May," murmured the delirious one.

"Thy wife, Frank Vernon?" repeated Ruth Etherell, in a voice of sharp agony. "Are you conscious? know you the full meaning of your words? How long *thy* wife?"

"Weeks, — months; — loved, ay, better than life!" He seemed now to take savage pleasure in adding to her anguish. She bowed like a reed bent by the tempest. She raised her glance to his; no sorrow glistened in the depth of those dark eyes; no woe was visible in the bitter, scornful curl of her red lip. She folded her shawl quietly about her, as though about to depart from a festive scene, and, with a step that never faltered, passed out; but her cheek was white as the hand which clasped the folds of her shawl, and from that hour it never was again seen to flush with emotion, neither were any traces of tears ever visible thereon. She was prouder in her humiliation than she had ever been before.

With a cheek for the first time paling for another's suffering, and a sharp pang of remorse, born of a love deeper than he had himself believed he was capable of, Frank Vernon lifted his young wife in his arms, and bore her through the hall up the broad oaken stairway, to a luxurious chamber over the front drawing-room, rang the bell violently, and called sternly for the old housekeeper; and when she came, said, pointing to the couch where, beneath the falling curtains of silk and lace, she lay tossing restlessly on the snowy counterpane, "There is your mistress, Ellison; nurse, tend, watch her as Mrs. Vernon, your master's wife! Do you hear me? Don't stand there staring at me, as though I were a

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madman! Look to her; she has been out in the rain. Order a fire kindled; take off her damp clothes. I will send Dickson for Dr. Huson;" and he went out on his way. A ringing laugh, a gush of song, followed him; it caused him to knit his brows, and compress his lips, it was so agonizing to him. He sent the footman, in haste, for the village doctor. He entered the drawing-room, and there found Annie seated, with the unopened package of letters in her hand, and Robert Etherell with her. When he approached her, she covered her face with her hands, and turned sorrowfully aside. He fancied Robert Etherell had been pouring all his bitterness against him into his sister's ear. Yet he did him wrong; he had been only telling her the truth,—opening her eyes to her brother's falsehood, and all the injustice she had done May. But he heeded it not. "Annie," he said, in the sweet, mournful voice peculiar to him, when he either feigned or experienced grief, and which was irresistibly winning, "Annie, my sister, in the apartment above lies one calling on you, in delirium;—your pure friend, Annie, and my own wife! She has come hither, unconscious, in the storm, delirious with fever. Will you not go to her,—our beautiful, loving May,—Annie? Listen! she is calling!" and through the half-open door came the ringing voice. Annie had been gazing upon him incredulously; but, the moment those wild tones fell upon her ear, she sprang up, and hastened out.

"Is this true, sir? If so, you shall answer to Ruth Etherell's brother for this," said a cold, haughty voice; and, with a dark frown and deep flush, Robert Etherell stepped forward.

"Remember, if you please, Mr. Etherell, that, to prosper your suit with Annie, you sold this *cherished sister* to me!" was the bitter, ironical reply; and he turned round and went out. Robert Etherell sank down upon the seat from which Annie Vernon had arisen. He was humbled, weary; he longed to go, he cared little whither,—anywhere, that he might be removed from the presence which so humiliated him;—one whom he forbade himself to retaliate upon, for the sake of her whom he loved. But for Annie he had borne much,—he could bear yet more. His glance rested upon the closed package; he opened it; two were enclosed in the one. He took up the first, and broke the seal; a miniature enclosed fell upon the carpet; he picked it up, started, and went

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forward to the light, to examine it more closely. It was like May, but yet not hers. The eyes were blue, the hair chestnut; hers were many shades darker. He laid it down upon the table, went back, took up a letter, and began to read. It was not his own, but he was unmindful of the impropriety, or, rather, forgetful of it, in the agitation and curiosity which the few words which had caught his eye awakened.

"Dearest Ellen," it began, "when, Raymond Churchill's happy bride, I left the kind home which you and your generous husband gave me, you entreated my confidence, should suffering come to me. Then I derided the possibility; but now, Ellen, — crushed, dying, — I seek you, to entreat of you protection for the child which I have borne to no father's love and watchfulness. I cannot tell you all my woe, for my husband has made it. He has thrust from him the love which, with all my errors, clung to him through all. Others have come between us, poisoned his heart against me, and he has left me! I am alone now, and I am dying! He cares not that time, in his absence, may have given him a child, for his heart is full of bitterness towards me. I also have done wrong; I have raised a stubborn will against his; I have been passionate and wayward, have sought not to conciliate him, as I ought to have done. But he forgave me not when we parted, though my cheek and my brow were paling in death. But not that, with the hot breath of passion, he has searched every fibre of my heart, do I seek to rob him of his child; but that I dread lest he chill her young heart with cold words; lest she grow up like a fair but unfragrant flower in the forest shade. And, O! I cannot endure the thought of this sunny brow darkening with fear of him! He will not mourn her, for he is unconscious of her birth. If he learns it, O, let him think she died with her girl-mother! and thou, Ellen, keep her in the sunshine of thy warm heart; cherish her with its genial warmth; hide from her earthly passions and sorrows; and I, her mother, will pray God in spirit to watch over her, and subdue her in her hour of passion, and warm her when the cold icebergs of life gather about her path, to chill her, my beautiful! for, O, she is very fair, in her infant loveliness, to me! But, Ellen, if you deem it unrighteous in me to hide from Raymond all knowledge of his child, do as you think right, — but as though you were her own mother, — as though you, also, had drooped

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and sorrowed beneath his coldness. And God bless you, in accordance with your kindness to her! We are alone here, in the country, and strangers. Judith will aid you; and keep her, Ellen, to care for my lone one. Kiss your own fair, dear little one for me! And I — your late joyous Catherine — bless you, sweet mother and sister of my orphan years, as I go sadly, but with resignation to my Father in heaven's will, down the dark valley of death. CATHERINE CHURCHILL."

A wild, earnest exclamation fell upon the ear of Robert Etherell, as he concluded, and he looked up to behold Mr. Churchill himself standing by the table, holding the miniature in his hand. Instantly he comprehended the connection existing between him and Mrs. Aubrey's sister, and, approaching him, placed the above-mentioned letter in his hand, briefly apologizing for having perused it, went out, ascended to his sister's apartment, and knocked at the door. There was a momentary silence; then the door opened, and she stood before him, very pale, but yet so calm that he began to doubt whether, after all, he had not still Frank Vernon's perfidy to communicate; but she relieved his doubt by saying, quietly,

"I suppose, Robert, you have come to ascertain when I leave here. In the morning, early as possible; if it were not for the heavy storm, this night!" She held the door partly open, as she spoke, making no motion to admit him.

"Can I come in, Ruth? I wish to talk with you," he asked.

"No; I had rather be alone; it is late, and I am fatigued," she replied, coldly.

They could hear the stir occasioned by the arrival of the physician, and the faint murmur of the sick one's voice, as the door of her apartment opened to admit him. The drooping lids of Ruth Etherell were raised slowly to his.

"Be so good as to interfere in no way with anything that may concern me," she added, sternly, and, bowing, closed the door. He could hear no sob, no sigh, giving evidence of grief; yet he felt none the less conscious that she experienced it.

When Robert Etherell placed the letter of his dead wife in Mr. Churchill's hands, he read and re-read it, as though he would impress

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every word upon his memory; and, when he ended, bowed his head, covered his face with his hands, murmuring, in broken sentences,

"O, Catherine! my wife! my darling! little you understood Raymond Churchill, when you deemed him cold! loved ever, through all your girlish waywardness, — dear to me, even in my own hours of passion and unbending will! My child! where is she? I must go to her!"

"You will not have to seek her far, Mr. Churchill," answered Robert Etherell, overhearing his last words, as he entered; "one roof covers you, your child, and Frank Vernon's wife. She is in the apartment above, but very ill, I learn, and delirious with fever. The physician has arrived; I passed him in the hall."

The father arose instantly, and passed up to the sick room. Annie Vernon and Dr. Huson stood by the bed, and her husband was bending over May, who lay with her bright eyes looking into his, her face turned towards him, talking very rapidly, but incoherently.

The physician was endeavoring to persuade him to leave her; but he was obdurate, until Mr. Churchill bent down and whispered a moment sternly in his ear. He glanced at the fair, flushed face upon the pillow, then back to Mr. Churchill's. The strong likeness struck him instantly, corroborating what he had told him. He freed his hand from May's clasp, rose instantly, and followed him to the library. Mr. Churchill stopped a servant, and ordered him to bring them, every ten minutes, intelligence of the sufferer. There was much decision and authority in his manner, and his companion would have rebelled angrily at his interference; but his spirit was shaken with the occurrences of the past few hours, and in the father's countenance he read a will powerful as his own. Hours passed, and still they remained alone in the library, the voice of Mr. Churchill rising scarce above a whisper, but unnaturally clear and stern. "If my child lives," was the burden of his conversation, "for her sake let there be peace between us; her will shall guide me; but if she does not, no shadow of a tie exists between myself and the villain you have proved yourself to be." His listener started, and his brow grew dark; but so thoroughly did he feel himself in the power of his wife's rich father, that he dared not give vent to his anger or bitterness. Mr. Churchill perceived the tempest within him, so difficult to quell, and a dark misgiving of the future peace of his child stole over

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him; but yet he could not school himself to pray that she might never wake from sickness to life, dark as that life might be; he could not desire the one ray of sunshine, checkered with gloom as it might be, to be dashed from his own lone path of life.

Early the succeeding morning, Annie Vernon stood on the hearth of the breakfast-room with Robert Etherell. It was still raining, and a fire had been lighted to dispel the damp and chilliness of the air. She was pale and sad, but very calm. All night she had been watching by May, and had now left her to bid Robert Etherell farewell. In her hand she held the package of letters which he had just given her, and with which May had, unaware, enclosed the one containing the secret of her parentage. They had been in her possession hours, but she had not read them, although he now himself requested it.

"I cannot do as you desire, Robert," she said, "for hereafter they may recur to me, and shadow my belief in your affection for myself, which I pray earnestly never more to doubt. You have erred, dear Robert, and, though circumstances have occurred to make your error more visible than those of many others, I must not forget that it has brought its own punishment to you, and that your penitence and remorse for the wrong which you have done should not be rejected by me, a poor, weak mortal like yourself, when it would be accepted by the all-perfect One in heaven. Though you at first faltered, you have triumphed at length over the spirit's weakness; and, to prove to you how strong is my faith and confidence in you now, I burn these, and cease to think of them as they perish;" and she then threw all into the fire, as she spoke. He folded her tenderly to his bosom, and a tear rolled down the cheek of manhood, and mingled with the woman's smile of bright hopefulness.

Immediately afterwards, Ruth Etherell left Deerville with him, though the rain was falling heavily. She expressed no regret; gave no token of sorrow; only an impatient, imperious desire to go home to New York immediately. She refused to see even Annie before she departed; bent her glance sternly upon the very servants as she passed to her carriage, as though suspicious lest they also were conscious of the insult which she had received.

Little passed between herself and Robert until she reached home; for she shunned all conversation. But when she arrived at her own home,

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she desired an interview; but not to allude to the past, only to request his consent to her settling a handsome annuity upon him, and her request for him never again to see her. As her guardian, he might have resisted her; but she was so bent upon having her own way, so haughtily exacting, so cold and imperious, with him, that he had no desire to oppose her. He could not endure to embitter her yet more against himself, for his heart yearned through all tenderly to her. He had a faint but vain hope that time would soften her feelings towards him for the part which he had played, and which he had frankly confessed; but she was inexorable.

She plunged into a giddy round of fashionable excitement, brilliant, admired, living luxuriously, spending lavishly; courted, flattered, but without one warm home-tie to guard her haughty spirit, or thaw her ice-crusted heart. Ruth Etherell, the beautiful, but the unloved, because unwomanly and defiant, became the idol of fashion. But she knew it was the reflection of her gold that gilded with eloquent love the soft whispers falling ever on her ear, and it served to embitter her yet more.

It was about a week or ten days after the occurrence of events previously mentioned, a soft, balmy spring morning, that Richard Knox entered the room where Willie Benson was breakfasting alone, at an early hour, and, throwing off his coarse straw hat, threw himself into a seat, saying, with a deep, long breath, "We have found the child, Benson. I obtained a clue to his man Dickson, after a long search, and easily bribed him to give her up. I have her now secure, and him also. He has thwarted me long, but his hour has come at last. Yesterday his house in town went; he has been trying to put them off, but he was powerless. It was precious to see the crowd, — the plebeian crowd, — desecrating his luxuries with their presence. I was in the dressing-room of his lady sister, amid the silken draperies and soft couches; and the memory of *her* miserable garret where *she* died was with me; and O, the click of the auctioneer's hammer fell with sweet music on my ear! And now I have yet a more precious task before me. I had little to do in New York but to stir them up to seize what he had there. I swore to him, when I last saw him, that I would take it all, wrest every comfort from him. He values this place at Deerville above all others. I once

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heard him boast that he was born there, and his father before him. But he will never more; he shall not remain there many days."

"He *shall* remain there, Richard Knox, while May lives! Neither you nor any one else shall take it from him, while it covers her!" said Willie Benson, for the first time rising up, and interrupting him. The sailor stood gazing upon him wonderingly, half-angrily.

"Who is May? What is she to you, Bessie Benson's brother?" he asked, ironically.

"Frank Vernon's wife, but an angel in her purity and goodness. Listen to me now, Richard. I knew her in childhood; we were warm friends, and all the glad hours of my youth were passed with her. I left her, as I left Bessie, a pure, glad girl. I came back to find her also drooping beneath his power. Though unconscious of the connection between them, in my anguish I poured into her ear Bessie's misery. He was her husband. She went mad, Richard, and in her madness went to him. He had kept the secret of their union from all; but, in his grief, he acknowledged it, for he loves her!" A ray of exultation shot over the countenance of Richard Knox.

"You are very forgiving, William Benson!" he answered, still more bitterly.

"You are harsh, Dick; but I can bear with you, for I know your bitterness born of great suffering, and you have never, like me, known May, or you would (for your heart is good and generous) bear much for the sake of one who, unsinning, suffers. You say I am forgiving; but it is not so. I would I were; but my spirit is yet more stern than it has been, as additional suffering, born of his selfishness, makes itself apparent. But I strive hard against it; for, though natural, it is none the less unchristian. I go out at night, Richard, into the grave-yard, when the stars in heaven only are looking upon me, and kneel by one grave, apart from all others, with blue violets blooming there in the early spring, and a rose-tree waving over it, which Bessie and I planted, and pray God to forgive the dark thoughts filling my heart through the day. O, Richard! let us leave the punishment of Frank Vernon to God, the all-wise. Already I can behold Him manifesting His wisdom in the spirit, for the first time touched by another's suffering. They tell me his grief is terrible to witness, as days pass by and his beautiful wife remains still

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unconscious, while her tenure of life grows ever frailer." Willie Benson's voice was eloquent, as he pleaded with his companion; but, though Richard Knox no longer gave vent to his anger in his presence, it was none the less bitter. He had been deeply wronged, and it hardened his heart. Still the one desire of his life was to humble and wring the heart of his torturer as his own had been. Willie Benson questioned him concerning the child of the unhappy Bessie, and would have fain persuaded him that he was the one to care for her; but he would not hear to him. He claimed her by right of the mother's consent that he only should care for her. In vain Willie strove to wring from him a promise not to molest May's husband, — at least for the present; but he was obdurate, and left him unconscious of his plans.

That night, at sunset, May awoke from the long, deep lethargy, into which she had sunk after a week's delirium, to consciousness. Old Judith and Annie Vernon alone watched by her side. She was too weak to notice the change from her own simple chamber at the cottage to the lofty room in which she lay, — only the familiar countenances watching by her side. The light of the hour, rich and mellow, streaming through the silken curtains, bathed her in its radiance, as she lay, white and helpless, on the pillows beneath her. She smiled — if anything so mournful, yet wearing the semblance of a smile, might be called one — upon them, and again her eyelids drooped; but now it was in sleep, — soft, refreshing sleep. Annie arose softly, and glided out. Her brother lay upon a sofa in the hall near the door, that had been his only resting-place since the night she came there; and always, when she came out from the sick room, she met his earnest glance turned in that direction. If he had cause to move, it was so cautiously that his usually firm step was noiseless as a woman's. He had scarcely spoken above a whisper. It was singular to witness him growing ever less firm and ever weaker as the voice of his suffering wife came at intervals to his ear, until his very spirit seemed crushed and broken. He who had ever commanded all beneath him imperiously, in the veriest trifle, now whispered beseechingly the servants to caution and silence, when they approached the sick room. He had become very pale and thin.

"She is better, Frank; she may live," whispered Annie.

He raised his head, drew her to him, and kissed the sweet lips that

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whispered him such blessed words of comfort, and arose and went down, opened noiselessly the hall-door, and stood on the threshold, gazing out at the golden clouds flitting over the blue sky, and drew in the sweet, soft air. A change was coming over him. He was growing more like other men. He had suffered much; — remorse had held his heart with its hand of fire. He thought, as he stood there in the red sunset, he would give much to live his past life over again, that memory might have no dark hours of sinfulness to recall. Still, it was not deep penitence; for it was only a clearer future that he was picturing, — one more worthy of his wife's purity, who was to share it. He was not endeavoring by any deed of humiliation or self-denial to expiate the past.

Suddenly he started, and drew back involuntarily, for Richard Knox stood before him. A bitter smile curled the sailor's lip. He fancied he perceived little evidence of the despair Willie had spoken of, as he marked the glad, hopeful expression on Frank Vernon's countenance; for he was unconscious the despairing anguish had passed, though his careless dress, his haggard look, gave evidence of it.

"Can I speak with you, Mr. Frank Vernon?" he asked, touching his hat with mock civility; and the gentleman led the way to the library. "When, sir, will you be ready to vacate the house to me? You are doubtless aware that the non-fulfilment of your contract gives me possession on the morrow, unless you, indeed, can fulfil your engagement, and pay what you legally owe me, before ten o'clock to-morrow morning," continued Richard Knox, in slow, stern, deliberate tones, as though he loved to linger on words which he felt must strike hard on his listener's heart, as he stood up before his deadly foe, determined to wound him to his utmost.

Frank Vernon gazed down upon the floor, with a grave, troubled expression in his eye. His thoughts wandered to his young wife, beneath that roof. He felt an earnest desire, an ardent longing had come over him, to do one act, no matter what it might be, which could raise him, in his own estimation, more to a level with her. He had lost much of the bitterness which he had felt towards Richard Knox; for the terrible injury which he had done him had perpetually recurred to him during the past week.

"Richard," he commenced, raising his glance to his companion, and

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suffering it to rest there, clear and unshaken, "I have injured you deeply. I ask your forgiveness."

"There is a demon within me whispering me to kill you in your lie, cowardly villain!" answered the sailor, with a fierce burst of passion, called forth by what he imagined the attempt of his companion to seek to conciliate him; and he hurried from his presence.

The face of Frank Vernon had flushed with anger, as Richard Knox spoke; but memory echoed in his heart the dead mother's cry when he took her child from her side, and it caused him to sink down and cover his face with his hands. He had not remained thus long, before Mr. Churchill entered. He looked up, and told him of the danger that threatened him. Mr. Churchill was aware that it had been long impending. The shock, if it came to his child's ear, might kill her. It would be long ere she would be able to be removed. He sent for a lawyer. He had grown rich in India; — he had much at his disposal. Frank Vernon's beautiful home became his. Richard Knox felt himself foiled. In his despair he cursed him who had rescued Frank Vernon from his power, and departed from Deerville. It was a long time before the villagers forgot the dark but handsome sailor, who was seen several times to stand in front of the old homestead where Bessie had been born, and gaze with burning eyes upon its white walls, shaded by tall trees; but never once known to drop a tear, with the exception of the last morning of his sojourn amid them, when a little boy with golden curls was drawn hastily from the road, where he was tossing the dust high with a rod, as a horse came dashing spiritedly down the village.

In the early morning the sick one awoke. She glanced round the unfamiliar room, and met the blue eyes of Annie. She was worn and pallid with her long and weary watch, but there was an expression of deep affection on her fair, sweet face. She bent over her, and kissed her pallid cheek tenderly. May was conscious of a hand which had all along smoothed her pillow and bathed her brow, and she knew it must have been Annie's. Judith sat at the foot of the bed asleep, for her watch also had been constant.

"How came I here?" questioned the invalid, in a low, clear voice; for she recognized where she was. "Did he bring me here, Annie?"

"No," answered the girl, truthfully, but softly.

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"Did I come here myself, Annie?"

"Yes, darling; but Frank has been very sad, — suffered much. He loves you very fondly, May."

The young wife laid her hand faintly on her brow, and tears stole from beneath her closed lids, and glistened on her drooping lashes. But she said nothing for a long time, — not until it was late in the afternoon. "I would like to see Harry Menton," she then said; and they sent for him. Dr. Huson had ordered profound quiet, but all her wishes gratified; for she was exceedingly weak, and declared any excitement would prove fatal. Her husband himself dared not go to her, even if Mr. Churchill would have permitted it.

It was sunset when Harry Menton entered her chamber. No one was present but her old nurse, and she gave way as he came forward. They had smoothed the long-ruffled drapery about her, brushed back her long, dark hair beneath her cap, and laid her back like a drooping flower on the snowy pillows. The little transparent hands were folded meekly over the counterpane, and her eyes appeared larger, darker, than of old.

The rector laid his hand quietly upon her head, and with her faint, mournful smile she whispered, "I have been very miserable, Harry, in the weary hours which have intervened since we parted; but I am better now. I have sent for you to strengthen me; for you are the only one who has ever loved me since Ellen died. And though I was wild and wayward with you, you forgave me. But all this long day, while they have thought me sleeping, I have been recalling all the holy lessons which you taught me in my careless childhood, and which I treasured then, in my love for you; and they strengthen me now in my sorrow; for there are many which I require all of woman's courage to bear in meekness. Will you kneel down here and pray for your poor weak May, Harry, that she may not be impatient and restive beneath the burden life brings back to her?"

And the rector knelt and prayed, from the depth of his heart, the fulness of his spirit, and he arose. May whispered, "My heart was cold, my spirit dark. All is light and warmth now; and if I falter I will call upon you; for I think I know now my duty. Good-night, dear Harry."

Days, weeks passed, ere she gained sufficient strength for them to ven-

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ture to impart to her the connection existing between herself and Mr. Churchill; but it did not agitate her as they had feared. With quiet joy she learnt a father lived to bless her with his affection. She desired to see him, would not be deferred; and the father wept like a child, as he held her to his heart, and drank in her murmured love and joy.

But there was one who she said she yet lacked strength to meet. Not until she was strong enough to leave her bed did she dare admit him, and Mr. Churchill saw that her wish was fulfilled.

"Has she no word of love for me? Am I the only one she will not see?" he questioned, with bitter anguish, of his sister. She strove to cheer him, — to soothe him, — but it was vain.

He gathered her the first early roses of summer which budded at the old cottage, and sent them to her. She put them away, for a bunch of blue violets, with Willie Benson's farewell ere he again left for his home on the ocean, was in her hand, which Judith had brought to her from the young sailor's sad heart, who had but waited to hear of her safety ere he left Deerville forever.

To no human being she made known her intention; but all knew that a sorrowful thought was ever intruding itself upon her. The roses were blowing, the air fragrant with their perfume, and laden with the gushing music of the forest birds; all around was bright and joyous, but in the heart of the weary invalid,— there was no summer there. She was serene and resigned, from a sense of duty alone. She remained much alone, seemingly wrestling with the spirit's weakness, and preparing herself for some great struggle.

At length, one sunny morning, as, seated in a large easy-chair, with a white wrapper folded about her, her father read aloud to her, she suddenly raised her head from where it rested on the window-sill, and gazed out upon the lawn. Whistling a mournful but musical air, Frank Vernon, followed by his dog, came slowly up the lawn, with his earnest gaze upon her. He had perceived her, as she sat there, half hidden by the drooping folds of silk and lace. For a moment her gaze met his, and her lip quivered, her heart throbbed. The sunlight was falling over him, as he paused there before her, in his graceful, manly beauty; but other forms, in imagination, were clustering around him, and the memory of the past fell like a dark veil of terrible gloom between them. She drew a deep

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sigh, raised her hand and beckoned him to her. With a glad smile he bounded forward. She could hear his step in the hall.

"Father, you had better go, — he is coming," she said, in a faint, tremulous voice, turning to him.

"Have you strength, my child?" How tenderly he spoke! Unconscious of her intent, he suffered her, unquestioning, to do as she herself thought right. He would not interfere; for she was his wife, and the only one to judge him. He only desired to know that she had the physical strength requisite for such an interview, — one which would be agitating in the extreme, whatever might be its termination; but, when she answered in the affirmative, he left her.

She bent her head back upon the soft damask of the chair; her eyelids drooped, her cheek was white and cold; even the rapid step crossing to her side was insufficient to break the icy spell which bound her; not until a soft, warm, loving kiss was pressed upon her cheek. Then the color came back with a hot glow, and she put him proudly back, and he knew himself repulsed.

Hours went by. The summer sun was high in the heavens, while its powerful rays fell hot and searching over the earth; but no hand stretched forth to close the cool Venetian blind, from the casement by which the young wife was seated. She felt not the powerful rays falling through the delicate lace upon her; for her heart was cold, and she shivered in her anguish as she marked the ever deeper woe her voice, so low, so sad, yet so firm withal, was creating in the soul of Frank Vernon, bowing before her. His passionate protestations of affection were hushed; he ceased to rebel against the decree which was to separate them on earth. Light was streaming in upon his spirit with the sad murmurings of that voice, revealing the dark, terrible past. The consciousness of the humiliation of the whole future to him, with that pure presence linked to his own, dark with crime, forced itself upon him. He could not live in the presence of May, and blush beneath her glance. And they parted, — husband and wife. Was it right? Was it well? The heart's weakness would have fain whispered no; but the spirit's strength answered yes, when the vows which united them were broken.

That night Frank Vernon departed from Deerville. Annie wept and mourned for him in his suffering; but she could not but feel the justice

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of the decree which exiled him from the presence of her whom he had deceived,—to whose destiny he had linked one which woman in purity must ever shun.

It was many weeks ere May was able to leave Deerville, and Annie remained with her while she required her presence and care. But in the early autumn Robert Etherell came down to them, and she was married in the village church by Harry Menton, the fate of her brother alone clouding her happiness. When the bridal party departed, the house was deserted, the paintings were covered, and every arrangement made for a long absence from the home with which so many painful associations were connected. The library and Frank Vernon's own room were alone left unmolested; and, before she departed, May went in, and placed a small miniature of herself, with a long letter, written at different intervals, upon his dressing-table. The old housekeeper and her husband were alone retained to take care of the place, and attend Mr. Vernon whenever he was pleased to make it his home. And Mr. Churchill, before their departure, wrote to inform him of the arrangements which he had made. Two weeks afterwards, Mr. Churchill sailed for Europe with his daughter, with the intention of residing many years, if not always, abroad.

It was in the middle of winter, on the anniversary of his marriage with May, that, for the first time, Frank Vernon visited Deerville.

It was night when he arrived, and snowing fast. As the carriage which bore him rolled slowly through the village, many a familiar object, dimly seen, caught his eye, but sufficient to send a sharp pang of pain through his heart. The Bensons' old home, with lights glimmering through the windows, was passed; Maple Cottage, dark and solitary, for that was closed, Judith having accompanied her mistress abroad; and last, his own home, on the hill's brow; but it looked desolate to him, for a light shone alone from the windows of his own room, and in other days the whole house was wont to be illuminated upon his arrival, while all had gathered to welcome him, the idol and the ruler there.

With his sadness there mingled something of bitterness; and, returning coldly the greeting of the old housekeeper on his arrival, he passed

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immediately to his room. A large fire had been there kindled, and all looked cheerful and bright.

He ordered his tea to be served in the library, and, taking off his coat, threw himself into a seat by the fire. After a while his glance fell upon the miniature lying on the table. He arose to see whose it could be, uttered an exclamation of passionate joy, and pressed it to his lips and heart. Then he caught up the letter placed there with it, and, opening it, read:

"When you open this, I, in all probability, shall be far distant from you; the ocean will roll between us, and your home will not be my home.

"Do not think that in the above sentence you alone read sorrow, for it is not so. When, for days and nights, I lay silent in the quiet of my sick room, and all the evil which you have done rose before me, then I imagined all love died with my faith in you. But, O no, Frank! I love you even now, with my own unalterable decree looming up, mountain-like, between us, and in earnest prayer for your welfare I will make it known to heaven. Still there is a link which will ever unite us in spirit, and yet more closely hereafter, when time, through repentance, shall have purified your soul from the terrible darkness with which your moral weakness has enveloped it.

"But I am not writing now to recall the past to you, for I am conscious it will never die; but I would seek to make this earthly parting less bitter.

"If, on that terrible day, when, after long parting, we met but to sever forever, I, in my unconsciousness and struggle not to falter in the task accepted as a duty, spoke harshly or sternly, — if, unwittingly, I made any unnecessary allusions in my distress, — I pray your forgiveness. Do not tax me with heartlessness; for every word which pained you wrung, as it were, forth, drop by drop, of my heart's blood.

"I do not cry, in my weakness, 'O, Frank! why have you done this?' I wish not that fate had never decreed our meeting; for yet, in all my sorrowing despair, I am grateful that out of my suffering good may come to you; for, in the knowledge of my love, Frank, you will find strength to wrestle with the tempter. O, that I may be made the humble instrument of our divine Parent to lead you to the light, though absent, still beloved, is my prayer!

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"Do not think that I can perceive no goodness in your heart, beneath the darkness with which you in your recklessness have enveloped it. There is a beam of light which shall deepen until it stream in radiance through your spirit, and dispel all of gloom; else you had not bowed so submissively to my decree of parting, — else you had not taken so bravely exile upon you, for my sake.

"Remember, I have left you not for errors, — not for sins committed against others before I became your wife, — but because you, in your calmness, conceived a project for bowing down in shame, a far more bitter thing than woe, the head of thy wife; that you took upon yourself a falsehood, to put me, for the sake of worldly ambition, from you. But I forgive you wholly, freely, though I may not ever forget; for life has taught me a lesson. Once, when forgiveness was prayed of me, I turned from the supplicant; and terrible is the fear which after years have given birth to, that out of that one unchristian deed sprang another's woe and fall.

"When a girl stood, one summer morning, before me, a child, in my home at Maple Cottage, with a spray of roses, an offering of penitence, drooping in her hand, I spurned her prayer; my young lips gave word to harshness. Had I, like our Saviour, blessed those who had caused me to suffer, perchance not like those roses had that fair young creature drooped, withered and died.

"And now, ere we part, again hear me, Frank, and remember still it is the voice of love that would make itself heard to you.

"If sickness or misfortune come to you, unwon by error, when you feel that penitence has made your affection worthy of an honorable woman's acceptance, there is one that will care, cherish, soothe you.

"When that hour comes, with it, O Frank, comes also May Vernon, your wife, with no memory of the past. Accept my blessing on your lone pilgrimage, and strive, still beloved, to achieve in the future honor and goodness, as an offering to our Father, who has been thus far patient and merciful with us, his weak ones."

Hours passed, and tears rained over the letter within his hands; and when at last he arose, he placed it within his bosom, a talisman, — a stronger, a better, a changed man.

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DECEMBER.

BY ELLEN LOUISE.

How coldly o'er the gloomy earth the winter sun shines down!
The tall trees shake their leafless boughs, the lead sky seems to frown,
And streams that danced and played in light a gladsome month ago
Go murmuring onward toward the sea, with requiem tones of woe;
The very steeple of the church has felt the chilling spell,
And the Ghouls shrink back and shiver, as they ring the vesper-bell!

And the moon-rays glimmer downwards, like letters faint and cold,
Wrote out on the granite pillars and marble domes of old;
And the golden stars of summer gleam forth like silver tears,
Which the icy reign of winter has chilled with haunting fears.
From the dying sun come murmurs, which the wild winds answer back,
As they haste, like restless pilgrims, along their earth-wide track.

And away from vale and dingle the fairy feet have gone;
They've left the purple passion-flower, they've left the tall black-thorn.
On high, through all the wild night-tide, the red star-cressets swing,
And they glance within the hollows, and on the Elfin-ring;
On the harp of brown December the mad breeze plays a tune,
And the red leaves dance like brownies beneath the waning moon.

But in sun-light or in star-light, or when the moonbeams pale
Glint on the wind-swept hill-side, or the dry leaves in the vale,
A serpent-sting comes gnawing at this weary heart of mine,
For the whole of brown December I think of Madeline.

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'T was the cold and chilly winter, when woods stand bare and drear,
And the winds go wailing over the hill-side and the mere,

She came from the restless shadows that flit through the elfin-land,
And pressed on my throbbing forehead the touch of her spirit-hand;
With locks like the shades at dew-fall which wandering sunbeams cast,
And brown eyes deep with memories and shadows of the Past,
And voice like the ringing music that swells from hidden caves,
Or the twinkling in the sea-shell brought from the South Sea waves,

And brow like the dreams of angels in the star-paved land above,
The maiden came from the Aiden, and blessed my soul with her love;
But the last night of December, when vanished years, like ghosts,
Were pulling away the old year, to join their restless hosts,
And the new came smiling gently, with tears in her brimming eye,
As a bride who blesses the future, yet weeps for the days gone by;

And the dying year lay struggling 'mid shadows dim and cold,
Like monarch in his death-fight with leag'rers fierce and bold;
There passed from my sight the maiden, with tones of spirit-love,
Away to the distant Aiden and glory that waited above.
But ever the drear December, when winds are sighing sair,
And the sun looks forth like a maiden, through mists of golden hair,

Or the moonbeams murmur faintly, like tones from vanished years,
A peace to the troubled present, with its restless hopes and fears,
My heart is sad for the vision that blessed the days gone by,
And the wind and stars seem chanting an old-time melody;
And serpent-stings come gnawing at this weary heart of mine,
For ever the brown December brings dreams of Madeline!

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ELMWOOD COTTAGE.

BY ELLEN LOUISE.

'T is a sunny, happy home,
Where the North-land breezes roam,
And the sunshine lingering plays,
All the long, bright summer days,
O'er the posy-sprinkled grass,
Where the fays at night-tide pass,
Sowing flower-seeds with white hands,
Gathered in the shadowy lands!

Tall the grove-trees rise, and fair,
Spread their arms, as if in prayer;
And the wild birds, seeking rest,
Building here a tiny nest,
Kiss their leaves, and murmur vows
Of *bird-love* amid the boughs,
Chiding, with a merry song,
All the summer hours along!

There are green hills smiling round,
Daisies peep from out the ground,
And a grave-mound rises nigh,
Where, in years long since gone by,

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Smoothed we back our Charlie's hair,
Kissed his brow, and laid him there;—
Left him, with a chanted hymn,
To the grave-rest, cold and dim!

Summer stars shine brightest down
Where the baby rests alone,
Sleeping sweetly all the night
In his coffin-bed so white!
Angels, bending from the skies,
Gently sing their lullabies
O'er the children gone to sleep,
Where the grave-yard willows weep!

There 's a beauty round us now,
Sunshine gleams on every bough;
And the breezes seem love-laden,
Spicy-sweet as gales in Aiden!
In the perfume-breathing morn
Smile the fields of yellow corn,
And the wild bees humming go
Where the dew-wet roses blow.

But the sunshine sweetest plays,
All the laughing summer-days,
Round the hearth-stone old and gray
Where our fathers knelt to pray;
Silver gleams my grandsire's hair,—
Heaven-rays are trembling there;
Kindles still his dimming eye,
At the thought of days gone by.

And upon my mother's brow
Sure a glory resteth now,
Like the halo round a saint,
Never dimmed by mortal taint;

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And, as on my braided hair
Rest her fingers thin and fair,
Blessings on her erring child
Speaketh she, the undefiled,—

Breathing words all glory-fraught,
Till the whole earth seemeth naught
But a gleam of love and light,
Blessing e'en the rayless night!
And there plays so sweet a smile
Round my father's lips the while,
You would think our home was blest
With a more than earthly rest!

Yet another face there seems
Beaming on me in my dreams,
Sitting in that velvet chair,
With his waving chestnut hair,
And a light in his brown eyes
Like a gleam from Paradise,
And a smile as sweet and faint
As the dreaming of a saint,—

Brushing back my heavy locks,
Golden-hued as sun-bathed rocks,
Kisses he my throbbing brow,
Till the blue sky seems to bow,
And the Eden-land grows nearer,
And its glory seemeth dearer,
While my soul keeps ebb and flow
To his voice, so soft and low.

Thus the darkness cometh never;
Spirit-sunshine gleameth ever
Round our sunny, laughing home;
For the sprites from Elf-land come,

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Keeping it all bright and fair,
With a more than mortal care!
Cheering us, when earth is dim,
With a spirit-glory hymn!

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ANNE HADLEIGH'S TRIAL.

BY MRS. C. F. GERRY.

"Bind the white orange-flowers in her hair.
Soft be their shadow, — soft, and somewhat pale;
For they are omens; — many anxious years
Are on the wreath that binds the bridal veil!"

It was the last day of May, — that sweet month, when the tearful spring seems standing on the very verge of her fair realm, to cast a glance at the triumphal approach of the summer. As if to fling enchantment round the few remaining hours of that happy time, nature wore her sweetest smile.

The sun shone gloriously, and here and there a mass of clouds, flushed with tints as delicate as the hues of the early blossoms, sailed over the azure sky. A soft, balmy breeze kissed the bright-lipped flowers, rustled the tender foliage, and made the silvery waters dance in their pleasant flow. The air was redolent of perfume, and musical with the glad songs of the joyous birds. Gayly they warbled in the forest aisles, where the tall old trees waved their canopy of leaves, and the mosses wove their carpet green and soft among the wild rose and thorn bushes, where the blue violets looked up from the turf like so many starry eyes, and winds went singing all the day. And gayly they warbled, too, among the broad branches of the tall old elms, that shaded the home of the Hadleighs. The sunlight that irradiated earth and sky on that fair morn shone into the drawing-room, and, taking a richer tint from the rosy hue of the drapery, shed a mellow light over the brilliant throng assembled there.

It was the bridal morn of Anne Hadleigh, and while the guests congregated in those gorgeous rooms awaited the appearance of the bride-elect, they were all, with different motives, discussing her prospects. She was

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too beautiful to escape the shafts of envy, pique, and pride; and, could she have read the innermost souls of those "dear five hundred friends" who graced her wedding, she would have seen there but a very small degree of esteem for herself, or regard for her future happiness.

Ever and anon the hum of voices and the sound of silvery laughter floated up to her ear, as she stood in her dressing-room. But she only gave a passing thought to the cheerfulness of her guests, and then became absorbed again in the important business of the toilet. Her favorite attendant had just adjusted the orange-flowers in her hair for the last time, and the bride's-maids were gathering round her, with admiring comments on her loveliness, when she heard a light tap at the door of her chamber. She sprang forward and laid her hand upon the latch, just in time to hear Wallace Carlisle's voice say,

"If you are all quite ready, dear Anne, we will go down now."

"Yes, in one moment," replied Anne, hurriedly, as she threw open the door, and her affianced husband walked into the apartment, accompanied by a trio of smiling groomsmen.

There was a momentary confusion in the little room, — a hasty search for fans and handkerchiefs, a last survey of bridal attire as the white-robed figures flitted by the costly mirrors, — and then the brilliant party swept away to the drawing-room. Every eye was fixed upon them as they entered, and the hum of voices at once subsided into breathless silence. Then the impressive ceremony commenced, and Wallace Carlisle and Anne Hadleigh spoke the solemn vows which united them to each other as long as life should last. The guests looked on, with feelings not much unlike those with which they would have witnessed the opening scene of a drama; for amid that festive throng there were few who fully realized the sacredness of those marriage rites. Even the bride herself, the bright, bewitching bride, was quite heedless of the solemnity of those promises; and while the responses were lingering on her lips she was wondering if the wreath of orange-flowers was really becoming to her style of beauty, and if Isabel Burton knew that her gossamer-like robe and veil had been imported from Paris expressly for *her!* Then gay friends gathered around her with their congratulations, and, amid many false professions, there were some who really hoped that no sorrow-cloud might dim the light of those sunny eyes, or sweep the smile from those

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full, red lips. Once only, while she stood receiving the greetings of her guests, did the sweet bride's face grow thoughtful. It was when a dear cousin, arrayed in widow's weeds, grasped her hand with a fervent pressure and whispered, "Dear Anne, may you be very happy! and in your joy, sometimes think of all I have told you."

Anne kissed the speaker very tenderly; and a slight shadow clouded her fair brow, as she met the glance of her tearful eyes. But the next moment, in the gayety that surrounded her, this trifling circumstance was quite forgotten.

An hour wore on, and Anne Carlisle, equipped in her elegant travelling attire, was bidding adieu to her guests. The newly-wedded pair were going to Niagara, and the carriage was already waiting to convey them away. Mrs. Hadleigh was the last to say "Farewell" to her daughter. "You have acquitted yourself admirably, my child," she whispered, as Anne grasped her hand. "Good-by, dear;" and, bending down till the rich plumes in her hair mingled with the glossy tresses of the young bride, she pressed her lips to her darling's forehead. She uttered no word of counsel, no fervent blessing, in that parting hour; for she was a worldly woman, and thought not of higher motives of action. Anne smiled, gave her a kiss in return, and then glided away, leaning on her husband's arm.

Thus Anne Carlisle went forth from her old home, to be the presiding genius of another's household, the sharer of another's destiny, with a thousand bright visions of an unclouded future, but without one serious thought of her own duties, or her dependence upon Heaven. Ah! Anne Hadleigh, like too many young brides, had not properly considered the important step she was taking in thus uniting her fortunes with those of another! She had never yet been fully impressed with the reality, the earnestness of life, — the ceaseless influence and thrilling interests linked with each one of the fleeting days spent on earth; much less had she realized the truth, that human existence is a scene of trial, and that sooner or later every heart must know the bitterness of sorrow's thrice-dregged cup. Eighteen years had passed with her like a summer's day, or a pleasant dream. The only child of wealthy and indulgent parents, all her wishes had been consulted, all her whims humored. She had been followed, flattered, and caressed. Living for herself alone, she had

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flitted from pleasure to pleasure, like a humming-bird roving among flowers. In the gay circles in which she moved she dazzled by her rare beauty and grace, and attracted by her bewitching *naïveté*. Such was Anne Hadleigh, when Wallace Carlisle first met her. The winning artlessness of her manners, contrasting so strikingly with the affected sentimentalism with which he had been disgusted, delighted him. He thought that such a glad-hearted, sweet-tempered being would fill his home with perpetual sunshine; and he resolved to win her for his bride. This was no difficult task, for Anne admired her handsome and intelligent suitor. His deferential tenderness soon awakened her regard; and in three months from her first meeting with Wallace Carlisle, she was his wedded wife. He looked forward to a happy life, with such a partner; but, alas! he had yet to learn that she had no fixed principles of action, no deep sense of the new duties which she was about to assume, no real depth of character.

As yet, her affection had nothing in it of the lofty, self-sacrificing devotion of a true woman. It had passed over her heart rather like the light breeze, which arouses the sparkling ripple on the waters, than the strong wind that stirs up the foaming wave. Anne was thoughtless, and her education had been little calculated to cultivate habits of reflection. Her widowed cousin was the only person who had ever talked to her seriously of the duties involved in the new relation which she was about to enter; but Anne would seldom give her undivided attention to such themes, and thus they failed to make any impression on her memory. Alas! to what frail keeping Wallace Carlisle had intrusted his domestic happiness!

Time passed away, and from various places of fashionable resort came the tidings that Anne Carlisle was shining a "bright, particular star." She was mingling in scenes of gayety and mirth; and there no step was lighter than hers, no smile more cheerful, no heart more joyous. It was Autumn ere Wallace Carlisle installed his "girl-bride" in her new home; and there her presence was indeed like a gleam of sunlight. It was very pleasant to see her light form gliding about in that stately dwelling; to hear her gay laugh echoing through the spacious halls; to glance up at the windows, and see the bright eyes watching his footsteps when he went forth, and to listen to the merry words with which she welcomed

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him home ; — all this was very pleasant to the young man, and his visions of happiness took a still brighter coloring.

A week, perhaps, after they had become established in their luxurious abode, an old and valued friend of Carlisle rang for admittance at the door of his dwelling. He had long been a sojourner in foreign lands, and was wondering if Carlisle would recognize him, when a servant politely answered his inquiries for his master, and conducted him to the drawing-room. As he entered, his eye fell upon a scene which a painter might have loved to copy. On a rich lounge sat Wallace Carlisle, turning over the leaves of a superb book of engravings, while beside him knelt a graceful lady, with her small hands clasped over his arm, gazing at the pages as he unfolded them. She wore a morning-robe of crimson cashmere, and a few bright blossoms were wreathed amid her curls, while all around her the rich light lay, like the atmosphere with which some of the old masters encircled their pictures of the Madonna.

"A stranger, sir," announced the footman ; and Carlisle came forward and met his visitor with an earnest welcome.

"Anne," said the delighted host, leading his guest towards the fair bride, "this is my friend, Mr. Lilbourne. Mrs. Carlisle, Frank ;" and a smile of pride passed over his face, as he spoke *her* name.

The young beauty welcomed the visitor with an artless, winning air that was quite irresistible, and Lilbourne was at once prepossessed in her favor. When the greetings were over the trio sat down together, and spent an hour happily indeed. There was no restraint, no formality, and the time sped delightfully. As Lilbourne's eyes roved over the tasteful splendor which surrounded him, he made some remark to Carlisle concerning his beautiful home, and his host proposed to show him some of the other apartments.

While lingering in the library, a discussion arose between the two friends concerning the comparative merits of their favorite poets, and the argument was carried on with much spirit.

Poor Anne ! the conversation had taken a turn in which she had not the least interest ; so she did not pretend to give her attention to it. For a few moments she traced the agate veins in an antique vase with the rosy tips of her jewelled fingers. Then she stooped to caress the grey-

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hound lying on the rug; and at last she took up her guitar, and idly touched a few chords.

"I declare, Wallace, this difference ought to be healed," said Lilbourne, at length; "Mrs. Carlisle shall decide the matter."

"Indeed, sir, I must beg your pardon," replied his pretty hostess; "I have not heard a word of your conversation."

"Anne is no pedant," said Carlisle, looking down upon her beautiful face with a tender glance. He laughed merrily as he spoke, and his wife chimed in with a laugh as musical as her sweet voice, as full of glee as her dancing eye, and her bright lips, that *would* break into a joyous smile every other moment. The library was still echoing with their merriment, when a servant announced to his young mistress that a messenger from her mother was waiting to see her. She glided away, and Lilbourne and his host were left alone.

"You have a charming wife, my dear Wallace," said the visitor, when the door had closed after the beautiful bride.

"I am of your opinion," replied Carlisle; "Anne is a gay, buoyant, sweet-tempered creature, and I assure you her frank simplicity is perfectly delightful, contrasted with the heartless affectation and sickly sentimentalism so much in vogue at the present day;" and he went on eulogizing his young wife in the highest terms. They were still talking of her, when the door opened, and Anne danced into the room, with a bright-plumed bird perched on her white hand.

"Mamma has sent me my bird, that she has kept in my absence, Wallace!" she said, as she smoothed its gorgeous plumage.

"Ah!" thought Lilbourne, "that young bride and her bright-eyed bird both seem formed to be petted and caressed. The sweet songster warbles enchantingly in this genial atmosphere, but it cannot breast a chilling blast with the bird that has been wont to bathe its plumage in the storm-clouds. Anne Carlisle is light-hearted and happy now; but should misfortunes gather round her, would *she* not droop like the weary bird?" Such thoughts often passed through Lilbourne's mind during the three weeks which he spent with the Carlisles; but he would not have given voice to his misgivings for the world, and when he left them it was with a sincere wish that his apprehensions might prove groundless.

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Weeks rolled away, and there was nothing like quietness in the dwelling of the Carlisles. The season was unusually brilliant, and almost every evening found them mingling with some festive throng. Besides, many friends had been sojourning with the newly-wedded pair, and, if they had no engagement abroad, there had always been a merry circle round their own fire-side. One cold, stormy night in February, they found themselves the sole occupants of their luxurious parlor.

"I declare, how strange it seems to spend an evening so!" said Anne, as she stood at the window, gazing out at the fast-falling snow.

"I am delighted with the prospect," exclaimed Carlisle; "this is our *first really quiet evening at home.*"

"For my part, I don't like quietness," resumed Anne, with something very much like a pouting expression on her rich lips; "it is n't in my nature to be quiet, and of all things I dread a dull, moping evening at home!"

"We shall not be dull," said Carlisle, as he led her to a seat near the glowing coal fire.

"I am so lonesome!" sighed Anne, sinking listlessly into the arm-chair that he drew forward for her; "so lonesome!"

Carlisle was determined to entertain her, and he began to talk of such subjects as he thought would interest her.

An hour passed very pleasantly; but then she began to grow restless and impatient. He proposed to read an entertaining book; but Anne was in no mood for listening. He asked her to sing some of his favorite songs, and brought her guitar himself; but even her singing lacked its usual spirit. She closed her last ballad rather abruptly, rose from her seat and stirred the fire, drummed impatiently on the marble mantel, trifled a few moments with the crystal pendants of the costly girandoles, and then sauntered to the window, and looked forth.

"How I wish some few friends would drop in!" she said at length, as she reluctantly went back to her husband, and nestled down upon the ottoman at his feet. "You are lonely, too," she continued, "and I don't wonder; it is dreadfully dull here!"

Carlisle placed her by his side, and began to talk to her of the value he set upon her happiness, and the pure joys that may cluster around *home.* At first, she listened with her eves fixed upon his face; but,

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at last, she hid her head upon his shoulder, and remained in silent thoughtfulness. Carlisle thought she had heard him with unusual seriousness, and, smoothing the sunny curls away from her forehead, he looked down upon her, with the expectation of seeing her countenance eloquent with emotion; but, alas for human hopes! Anne was *asleep!* A feeling of bitter disappointment stole over him, and he was absorbed in a painful revery when a violent ring at the door-bell aroused him. Anne was awakened by the sound, and the next moment a servant informed her that her gala-dress, for to-morrow evening's ball, had just been sent home. Her languor vanished, at once; she ordered it to be brought to her immediately, and then surveyed it with childish eagerness. Carlisle could not help comparing her thoughtless indifference to his society with this animation and delight in a mere trifle, and his heart sank at the contrast. He charitably resolved to forget it; but, alas! in later days it rose up to his memory, as if it had been written there "in letters of lava." Such was the *first step* that Anne Carlisle took in dispelling the halo with which her husband's partial eye had surrounded her; such her *first careless step* in a path that eventually led to care and sorrow. As time went on, Carlisle became more and more convinced of her faults; her thoughtlessness and volatility no longer seemed *naïve* and charming. Anne had hitherto lived so entirely for herself, that she made no endeavors to cultivate an interest in his tastes, and took no pleasure in sacrificing any light wishes or habits of her own to promote his happiness. She had no idea that it was her *duty* to perform any little offices for his comfort, or, as the mistress of his household, to superintend its arrangements. The consequence was, that their domestic affairs were often sadly out of order; and, though Anne was loud in lamenting it, she was the last person who could remedy the evil. Wallace Carlisle learned, at last, that the beautiful young girl who graced his home was never to be a helpmeet to him, — a sharer of hopes and fears, a counsellor and comforter in sorrow. For a time he preserved his usual demeanor in her presence; but, at last, he came to the conclusion that he would no longer lavish his devotion upon one too heartless to appreciate it. He ceased to anticipate her wishes, — she was obliged to express them now, and often several times, before they were noticed with more than a passing thought. Hitherto, if he had seen a tear trembling in her bright eyes, or a cloud

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on her fair brow, he had endeavored to dispel every shade of sadness; but now he witnessed all her changing moods with the most imperturbable calmness. He grew stern and morose; his voice lost half its music, and even his smile became cold and sarcastic. A consciousness of this marked change in her husband's appearance soon forced itself upon the mind of Anne; but, strange to say, instead of attributing it to her own faults, she ascribed it to the fickleness of Carlisle. She became capricious and exacting; sometimes she met him with tears, but oftener with frowns or pertinacious sullenness; and Carlisle saw now that the temper which he had thought so pleasant was only genial when there was nothing to disturb its serenity. At length, finding that her varying moods had no influence over her husband, she resolved, as she expressed it to her mother, "not to regard the moroseness of Carlisle in the least, but enjoy herself in spite of him." Mrs. Hadleigh approved this resolution, and so Anne became gayer than ever; but now and then the contemptuous glance and ironical smile which her ill-timed merriment called forth from her husband would make her heart sigh for the happy days of yore. The gloom of coldness and distrust was fast settling over the home which had once been so cheerful; for, alas! both Wallace Carlisle and his young wife had disregarded the duty of mutual forbearance!

Such was the state of things, when a trivial incident aroused the conscience of the giddy Anne. Her husband's favorite cousin, who, with Francis Lilbourne had been the sharer of his confidence for many years, was spending some days with the Carlisles, and one morning, as she was standing in the room adjoining the library, she unintentionally became a listener to their conversation.

"And so you are engaged?" said the voice of Wallace; "have you considered the step you have taken? Robert, as I love you, I advise you *never to marry.* You and I have both had our dreams of home and fireside, and you had better bid yours vanish now, than, like myself, realize how vain they were when *it is too late!*"

"Wallace, Wallace!" exclaimed his friend, in a tone of surprise.

"Alas, it is too true!" continued Carlisle; "I thought Anne Hadleigh sweet-tempered, gentle and affectionate; I have found her to be thoughtless, capricious and exacting!"

A stifled sob welled up from Anne's heart, as she glided away; and

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from that hour she began to *think*. She did not immediately commence a new course of action; but she reflected on the past, and endeavored to search out from her memory the slightest facts that might prove the assertion of her husband to be correct. Then conscience spoke to her in its voiceless but thrilling language, and she began to see her errors. Ah! had Anne formed the habit of reflection earlier, she might have been spared much sorrow; but the great fault of her life had been that she *would* not abandon herself to serious thought. She was revolving a thousand half-formed plans in her mind, when her widowed cousin came to take up her abode with her for a few weeks. Mrs. Mercer had not seen the young bride since her wedding-day, and her quick eye soon discovered, despite all her assumed cheerfulness, that her fair cousin was the glad-hearted, buoyant Anne no longer. Three evenings after her arrival, while they stood together, watching the rising moon, Mrs. Mercer alluded to the time when they had last gazed upon it thus, — the night previous to Anne's bridal. As the picture of that happy hour rose up before her in vivid contrast to her present misery, she hid her face on her cousin's shoulder, and abandoned herself to a fit of passionate weeping. It was long ere Mrs. Mercer succeeded in soothing her grief; but then Anne related her sorrows. She spoke of her husband's sternness, of his neglect, of her own wretchedness, and concluded by a vehement wish that she had never left her parents. Mrs. Mercer regarded her thoughtfully for a few moments, and then inquired if she thought her own course had always been perfectly right. Anne was obliged to confess the truth; and her cousin went on to tell her earnestly of the pure and holy influence which woman may exert, not "by any pompous display of individual principle," but by the kindly glance, the cheering smile, the word of sympathy, the gentle care to throw around her dwelling the sacred spells of home. The elevating influence of such teachings as these prompted Anne to resolve that she would no longer live for herself alone, — that she would overcome her thoughtlessness, and strive by her efforts for her husband's comfort and happiness to dispel the dark cloud hovering over them. Carlisle observed how much more cheerful the household became with the presence of Mrs. Mercer, and the happy change in his wife's deportment; but his temper was so embittered, his judgment so warped, that he could not believe that Anne had resolved to

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lead a better life. He had so long and vainly hoped for her reformation, that he *would* not *hope* now, and construed all her kind attentions to him into a wish to deceive her cousin as to the true state of affairs.

"I wish we could have persuaded you to stay longer," he said, when he handed Mrs. Mercer into the carriage, the day of her departure; "we shall miss your pleasant society very much."

"Thank you, cousin," replied the lady; "but you and Anne will be happier without me."

"I have long since despaired of happiness with Anne," said Carlisle, seriously.

Poor Anne! — she heard it, and her good resolutions well-nigh fled before it; but her cousin whispered, in the beautiful language of Mrs. Hemans, "Be strong and bear thou on, my love," and she resolved to persevere in her efforts. But, alas! those endeavors were fruitless, — Carlisle was in the wrong now, and Anne saw it was to no purpose that she followed the promptings of her better nature. His prejudices against her, and firm belief in her selfishness, deadened his heart to all her timid exertions, and threw a false coloring over every praiseworthy action. He was becoming more and more cold and stern, when Francis Lilbourne returned from another sojourn abroad. His first call was at Carlisle's residence, and with an anxious heart he rang for admittance. Two years had passed since he left that stately dwelling. Should he find its inmates as happy as he left them? Such was his mental query while he waited the appearance of the servant. At last the door opened, and the footman informed him that his master was absent, and that dinner had been waiting for him an hour. Lilbourne was about to inquire for Mrs. Carlisle, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and the familiar voice of his friend gave him a cordial greeting. He was so delighted at the meeting, so full of heart-felt pleasure, that Lilbourne did not at first perceive the change which had come over his host. They were chatting with the freedom of old and tried friends, when a servant announced that dinner had been waiting some time, and the gentlemen proceeded to the dining-room. Anne was already there, and, at the first glance, the visitor saw that she was far more beautiful than when they last met. Carlisle's words, as they approached her, were the first

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indication of the reserve which had taken the place of their former happiness.

"Mrs. Carlisle," he said, coldly, "you probably recollect my friend, Mr. Lilbourne."

How unlike the kind words and winning smile with which he had introduced him to his bride two years before! It was evident that his hostess felt this painfully, too, for a crimson flush rose to her white forehead as she greeted her guest, and there was a slight tremor in the jewelled hand which she extended to him. They seated themselves at the table; but, before the dinner was over, Lilbourne saw that a deep gloom had darkened the hearts of his friends. Anne — the gay, gladsome Anne — seemed laboring under some painful constraint, while conversing with him. She would occasionally glance timidly at her husband, and often blushed deeply when she saw the scornful curl of his lip, and the expression of his eyes. Even her smile had lost its sunshine, and her laugh its mellow, gushing music. Carlisle's manner towards her pained Lilbourne's heart still more; he was distant and reserved, and scarcely treated her with the politeness due to a *stranger*. The tender deference that had endeavored to fulfil her lightest wish, the proud delight with which his eye had followed her graceful figure, the kind words with which he had addressed her once, had given place to frigidity and neglect. Lilbourne retired to his room, with his spirits sadly depressed; but, after reviewing the matter in his mind, he resolved to keep silence for a time, and ascertain whence this sad change had arisen. A week passed thus, when one day, as they arose from dinner, where he had been relating some incidents of travel, Carlisle said, "Come, Frank, let us adjourn to the library, and then I shall pray you to proceed. I am delighted with your conversation."

It had been Carlisle's custom to spend no time with Anne, save when at meals, during this visit of Lilbourne's; and his guest, thinking this a favorable opportunity for disapproving of such a course, replied, "And leave Mrs. Carlisle alone, Wallace, as we have done ever since my arrival? I declare my conscience reproves me for it!"

"Mrs. Carlisle will be glad to excuse us; she takes no interest in such conversations, and they would be perfect gibberish to her! She

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has no taste for anything beyond some trifling article of feminine finery," was the sneering reply of Carlisle, as he threw open the library-door.

Lilbourne felt the injustice of the remark, for Anne had manifested a deep interest in the subject of conversation; he saw a burning blush suffuse her cheek, brow and neck, and the tears gush into her eyes, as this taunt fell upon her ear. He hesitated a moment.

"Carlisle!" he said, turning towards his friend. Anne saw his look and gesture, and her face grew perfectly colorless.

"Do not speak to *him!*" she said, in a husky whisper, lifting her white hand to dash away her tears. "Go, go!" and, trembling like a wind-shaken reed, she hurried from the room.

Lilbourne silently followed his host; but, for a time, neither uttered a word.

"Wallace," said Lilbourne, at length, "you and I have been friends a long time, and, as one who earnestly desires your good, let me tell you that nothing grieves me so much as the sad change in your home, since my absence. Wallace, I never could have believed, had I not heard it, that your lips could have uttered such a taunt to your beautiful young wife."

"Ah!" said Carlisle, "you do not know how miserable I am!" and he proceeded to relate the history of his estrangement from Anne.

Lilbourne heard him in silence, and at last said, in a low voice, "Whatever may have been your faults or hers, it is evident that she desires a reconciliation. I have seen this plainly; and, Wallace Carlisle, *you* are the last person to act as you have done to-day."

"I would give the world to have this distrust swept away," resumed Carlisle, pacing hurriedly to and fro.

"Then be reconciled to her," said Lilbourne; "be reconciled;" and, with this advice, he left his friend to his own thoughts.

"Be reconciled!" The words rang in Carlisle's ear with startling distinctness; they haunted him like the ghost of the happy days fled. He endeavored to read; but this sentence rose up everywhere upon the pages. He strolled down to his extensive warehouses, and sought to bury himself in busy cares; but these words looked out upon him from the dusty legers, and the business correspondence. He resolved to confess his faults, and once more restore gladness to his now desolate home.

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In the mean time, Anne, in the silence of her own room, was forming her resolves. Her husband had rudely repulsed all her conciliatory efforts, — had preserved his frigid reserve, despite her best endeavors to dispel it; and, to crown the whole, had uttered that bitter taunt in the presence of Lilbourne. He had deeply wronged her, and no more would she torture her brain in devising means to merit his esteem, no more would she seek to win him back to love and peace. Such was the disappointed Anne's decision; and so, when at night-fall Carlisle returned home with the determination of becoming reconciled to her, she did not come timidly forward to meet him, as had been her wont of late. He entered the parlor; it was vacant and dreary, — no lights had been brought in, his easy-chair and slippers had not been placed beside the hearth-stone as usual, even the fire had died out, and everything looked cold and cheerless in the splendid room. All these little things, which she had made her care of late, were neglected. Carlisle walked to and fro, expecting every moment to hear her light step approaching; but she came not, and he stole up to her boudoir; that was dark and vacant too, but through the half-open door glimmered a ray of light. He passed into her dressing-room; two alabaster lamps, white as if carved from new-fallen snow, shed a sickly brilliancy over a table loaded with rifled caskets, tiny gloves, embroidered handkerchiefs, a dressing-case, filled with gilded flasks, and various other articles of the toilet. He took up a little silver bell, and shook it hastily; a servant appeared, of whom he asked for Mrs. Carlisle.

"She has gone to Mrs. Leighton's fancy ball, sir," was the reply.

"Very well," said Carlisle, coolly; and *half* his good resolutions vanished now. The light laugh that came to his ear when Anne ascended the staircase late that night, the chilling hauteur with which she met him in the breakfast-room the next morning, and her relapse into the same thoughtless gayety that had so often displeased him, served effectually to remove the remainder. From that time, she ceased to perform any of those offices which Mrs. Mercer had suggested to her, or to seek to promote his happines.

She went the giddy round of fashion, laughed, sang and chatted, as merrily as in her happiest moments; and if Carlisle uttered one of those sarcastic taunts which had once wrung her heart, she replied as bitterly,

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or with a careless levity far more irritating to him than the keenest satire. Sometimes the low tones of conscience told her that she was pursuing a wrong course; but now she silenced its monitions with the thought that all her efforts towards peace had been slighted, and that she might be justified in abandoning exertions so entirely useless. Thus reasoned Anne; for she had not yet learned to bear and forbear, — to forgive even till "seventy times seven." Alas! the unhappy pair were suffering from neglect of that duty so essential to happiness in the conjugal relation, — the duty of *mutual concession*. Their home of luxury had become a scene of splendid wretchedness; and at length Carlisle, weary of leading such a life, set out for a romantic cottage which he owned in a distant country-town. Three weeks after his departure, as Anne was looking over the letters brought by the morning post, her eye fell upon one mailed at the village where her husband was residing. Her heart beat fast, as she hurriedly unfolded it, and read as follows:

"MADAM: — I deem it my duty to inform you that my friend, Wallace Carlisle, is suffering from a severe attack of brain fever, and that all hopes of his recovery have been abandoned. He is delirious, and has expressed no wish that his friends should be apprized of his danger; but he raves constantly of you, and I have thought it expedient to give you this information. Yours, truly, EDWARD HOLBROOK."

The signature was the name of a college acquaintance of her husband, and she knew that he was a physician of high repute. The letter fell from her trembling hand, and, with a low moan, she sank down upon the floor in a state of unconsciousness; but not long did she remain senseless. As the dreadful tidings came back to her, she arose from the couch where she had been placed, and, desiring to be left alone, abandoned herself to bitter thought. Fancy conjured up the form of her dying husband, and memory brought back the past with painful vividness. All Carlisle's early devotion, and their subsequent unhappiness, rose before her with thrilling power, and she was almost overwhelmed with the intensity of her emotions. Mrs. Norton, the sweet English poetess, has said that "the lightest heart makes sometimes heaviest mourning," and Anne's buoyant spirit well-nigh sank beneath her burden of anguish.

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But still she wept not, — her grief was all too deep for tears; and the blanched cheek, the trembling lip, and the mournful glance, alone expressed her sorrow. While her mind was swayed by a thousand tumultuous emotions, her eye fell upon a Bible laying on a Mosaic table near her; it had been the gift of Mrs. Mercer, and she now remembered the words with which her cousin had presented it to her. As she turned over the leaves, she saw the following passage: "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, — to all that call upon him in truth." The words came to her like a messenger of mercy, and for the first time Anne Carlisle prayed in penitent earnestness. That humble prayer floated up to One all-powerful to save, and her troubled spirit grew calm. The latent energies of her character began to awake, — the light, thoughtless girl to merge into the self-sacrificing woman. Long before the rich sunlight had faded in the western horizon, she was on her way to Luneville, accompanied by the old butler; and the third day after her departure from home, she stood beside her suffering husband. He was lying upon a low couch, with his thin fingers clenched over his eyes, muttering incoherently, in a husky whisper; his face was suffused with a deep crimson flush, his lips were parched and swollen, and she could see the pulses throb in his temples. She smoothed back the damp hair from his brow, and laid her hand lightly on his burning forehead, as she had often playfully placed it there in happier days.

"Anne, dear Anne!" murmured the sufferer, in the old, familiar tones, that "smote upon her heart like the rod of Moses on Horeb's rock;" and, loosing his clenched fingers, he lifted his bloodshot eyes to her pale face, and smiled as had been his wont of yore. "Let your hand rest there," he continued, "let it rest there, Anne. I told them I could sleep, if your hand could lie thus on my forehead;" and he sank into a fitful slumber. Then, for the first time since she heard the tidings of his illness, Anne Carlisle's tears flowed like summer rain.

Day after day passed; and dawn and sunset, twilight, and the "night's still noon," found Anne keeping her lonely vigil beside her suffering husband. He was passing through great peril, trembling on the very verge of death's shadowy realm, and often it seemed as if every breath would waft his spirit to the unseen world. Who may tell the thoughts of that anxious watcher, as she listened to the frenzied ravings

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that revealed his wretchedness, and reflected on the incidents of their past life? She now saw their estrangement in its true light; and while she wept and watched and prayed beside the invalid, she formed resolutions that exerted over her a pure and lasting influence. But it was not the will of the Almighty to number Wallace Carlisle with the early dead. At length the crisis passed favorably, and reason came back to her throne. In his momentary intervals of sanity the invalid had seemed to recognize Anne; he had passionately implored her not to leave him; but not till his delirious fancies had ceased to haunt his brain did he know that the patient watcher, who had hovered round him so constantly, was his young wife. She gave no pompous recital of her efforts in his behalf; but the generous physician portrayed such a touching picture of her devotion as filled Carlisle with joy and gratitude; and his penitent Anne was restored to her old place in his heart, as a weary bird, drooping with its struggle to buffet the wintry storm, would be welcomed back to its nest. We will not repeat the mutual confessions that were made, the pardon that was humbly begged and gladly given, or the new and holy resolves formed by the reünited pair — it is not for us to describe such scenes as these, and we only touch them lightly.

Many months passed before Wallace Carlisle fully recovered; but long ere his usual health returned to him he and his young wife were "walking in newness of life." They had learned to seek divine guidance through all the changing scenes of human existence, and to place their trust in heaven.

When they again took up their abode in their city residence, it became truly a *home*, irradiated by the light of *real* happiness and peace. Time and cultivation have fully developed the once dormant energies of Anne's character, and during many hours of trial and suffering she has shown the lofty spirit of a *true woman*. Years have passed since these events transpired; but, dear reader, should you wish us to point out a home where the duties of the conjugal relation are strictly exemplified, we would refer you to the abode of Wallace and Anne Carlisle.

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FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

BY JAMES G. BAXTER.

'T is noon in the rustic village neat,
'T is noon in the pent and dusty street;
'T is noon in the woods, and noon in the fields,
'T is noon where vice its influence wields,
And virtue each mild pleasure yields;
'T is noon 'mong the weeds and the flowrets fair,
'T is noon on the sea, and the rock so bare;
'T is glaring noon-day everywhere,—
Breathless and hushed;—but, hark! that sound,
Like the murmur of waves on a shore rock-bound!
What is it that strikes with such thrilling tone
On the heart, till it seems like a mighty stone?
Sometimes lost in the distance faint,
Till you think 't is naught but the zephyr's plaint;
Then from some far-off point up-caught,
And borne along, with new fury fraught!
"Fire! fire!" shrieks the pallid throng,
"Fire! fire!" as they hurry along;
With the rattling engines crashing high,
And the 'larm bells ringing far and nigh,
Vomiting forth from their brazen throats
Shriekings, and wild, heart-freezing notes,
Rolling and groaning on the air,
Spreading terror everywhere,

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Till the breath is stifled with clouds of smoke,
That settle down in a sable cloak,
Muffling the roofs, and the noon-tide sun,
Hiding the sky, as if time was done,
And 't was the dawn of the judgment-day;
While ever is falling a deluge of spray,
And ever is rising a fierce array
Of lurid writhing sprites of flame,
Grasping all with a ruthless claim,
Leaping forth with a hiss of joy,
Embracing things they intend to destroy!
Till, spent with their rage, the mighty crowd
Mutters and roars like the thunder loud,
Surging wildly forth and back,
As in the tempest the billowy wrack!
O! a wild, tumultuous scene,
Is the fire-king's feast, — and a sad, I ween!
Well may it thrill and madden him
Whose all is seized by the monster grim!
Clattering, clashing, and hurrying along, —
Roaring and rumbling of distant gong, —
Hurried orders, in thundering tones, —
Clanking hoofs on the flinty stones, —
Shrieks of fear, and shouts and moans; —
All aboon a fiery world
Of glittering sparks, which about are hurled
By the ever-shifting and wayward air,
In showers of fire-brands, far and near; —
Walls falling, and chimneys reeling, —
Men staggering, 'neath cracking ceiling,
With burdens rich; — but, ah! more sad,
When all is o'er, and the strength you had
Is gone, and when you can only stand
Where naught is left, for the household band,
But charréd beams and murky clouds,
Hanging above, like mourning shrouds.

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Ebbs the crowd, as the fire goes down,
  Ebbs the crowd, like the vasty tides;
They seek their home, as the fire goes down,
  And are welcomed back to their own fire-sides;
But there is one in that scattering throng,
  Returning home to his humble shed,
  Who has not that firm and guiltless tread
With which he is wont to hurry along,
  Bearing home the sweat-earned bread,
But with a startled, suspecting air,
As holding something which caused him care.
  He reaches his hut, and he bars the door,
And takes from his bosom a casket of gold,
  And gloats his eyes on the joy-bringing store;
No more fear to grow weak and old,
  For with gold he can keep from the poor-house door;
No more will his children cry for bread,
  For he has enough for them now, and more!

But he has advanced on a perilous road;
On a mine of destruction, unguarded, he 's trod;
Within him there 's ever an angel of light,
Urging him back to the pathway of right;
But a fiend in the casket, with glittering eyes, —
Hard, shining, and chilling, and golden eyes,—
Its tempting power each weakness tries;
And that fiend is the phantom of evil, who flies
  Ever before, with a fancied store
Of pleasure; but, ah! when caught, surprise!
  Happiness seems far off as before,
And the tempted one follows on, in despair,
The ignis fatuus, and grasps but care!
All night long the battle goes on,
  All night long, between wrong and right;
Conscience goads, but the tempting one
  Soothes the pain with this anodyne slight:—

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"They who lost have been always rich;
He who found has been always poor;
Beside, they've enough that's left them now;
He'd better not go from door to door,
Seeking the loser; perchance, if he does,
Some one will get it who owns it not;
And surely our God designed for the use
Of *all* men the goods of this earth, and the lot
Of *all* to be equal, though some have deprived
The rest of their share;" and thus he strived
Till dawn to quiet his soul; but, no;
'T will never, never be quieted so!

O, morn! most soothing and holy of hours,
What a spell thou hast for the troubled heart!
Thou breathest of nothing but sunshine and flowers!
And, Morning, I would thou couldst never depart.
Thy breezes are caught from elysian bowers;
Their pinions they've dipped in the dews of heaven;
With their freshness, the cloud of temptations which lowers
O'er many just yielding away has been driven!
Every morning we see how polluted we are;
We taint the soft gales with a poisonous breath;
And the music with jarrings and slaughter we mar,
And write o'er the earth the grim record of Death!
Yet the morning's bright beams all the dim earth illume,
And smile from our hearts every shadow of gloom.

The morning sun shone through the pane,
And lit the room so dark and small,
Quaint and poor, but neat and plain,
With a flood of gold, o'ersweeping all!
It glinted upon the uneven floor,
It tinted the walls with a rosy bloom,
Through cracks and patches many a score,

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From every nook it swept the gloom,
And left a blessing in the room.
Its spell crept into the tempted one's heart,
And a flood of tears gushed forth at the thought
That, except from the casket of gold he should part,
He never again on the morn, beauty-fraught,
Could look with the peace and delight of old times,
When, up with the lark, in the cool, fresh air,
He trusted his song, ere the matin chimes,
As with strong hands he drove away care!
For, though gold is bright, yet the heavenly light
Of peace, which nothing but honor gives,
Is far more lasting, and far more bright,
For every shade from the heart it drives!
Till forth in the street has the penitent strolled,—
Forth in the street, with his purpose told,—
The tempting hoard with joy to restore,
And return to his peace-bringing labor once more!

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THE LAST POEM.

BY OSCAR G. HUGHAN.

In a garret whose one small window looked out into the busy thoroughfare known as "King's Road Pimlico," on the night of the twenty-third of November, eighteen hundred and twenty-six, sat a pale, emaciated youth, poring over some old, worm-eaten books.

On the table before him was a dimly-burning lamp, which occasionally he picked into a brighter flame with a Lucifer match. Paper and ink lay within reach, and the pen which he held in his wasted hand had evidently been quite recently used, as its point was still moist.

Throwing the volume from him with a deep groan, he leaned back against the cold, damp wall; for, though there was a grate in the miserable apartment, it contained nothing but a few white ashes.

He appeared to be about twenty-eight years of age, or somewhere in that vicinity. His dark auburn hair fell in luxuriant curls over a lofty and classical forehead, that seemed shadowed both by care and sorrow. His dark blue eyes were lighted with that fire which genius bequeaths to all her children, accompanied with a restless, penetrating glance, except when in a state of repose, and then they revealed glimpses of deep tenderness and exalted passion.

His nose was well formed, though perhaps a little too large to meet the exact requirements of beauty; but his mouth, chin and bare neck, were faultless in their artistic mould.

By almost any common observer he would have been pronounced a handsome man; but to those who regarded outward perfection but as the type of inward and spiritual beauty he was still more than that. About

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his dress, which was anything but costly, there was that certain *je ne sais quoi* which denoted the wearer's elevation above the common herd.

At first sight, you would have been inclined to think him a student pondering over some deeply scientific problem; but the extreme wretchedness of his condition put to flight that supposition at once; for one whom nature and education had rendered capable of wrestling with the giants of scientific discovery would hardly be allowed to dwell in such abject misery and want.

I said it was November, and the snow had fallen several inches during the day, and lay piled up outside the broken window.

Gust after gust of freezing air entered the room, at times extinguishing the sickly light, that had nearly burned to the last drop of oil, but which the poor student patiently relighted. The blast roared in the chimney, and sighed out many a hollow sound, as if in mockery of *his* uncomplaining misery.

And then again the lamp went out, and all was darkness in that dreary room. Rising from the table, the student once more endeavored to relight it; but this time the increasing dampness of the walls seemed likely to frustrate his attempts. At length, however, he succeeded, and again the feeble light was flickering in its socket.

Taking a piece of old carpet from the bench that served to support his bed, he thrust it into the broken pane, and sat down to write.

Long and wearily he wrote, and when at last the clock of Saint James' tolled out the noon of night, he laid aside his pen, and folded up the manuscript he had been writing. "This will be my last attempt," he murmured, as he placed it in a side-pocket of his thread-bare coat. "If it fails, then farewell to yon bright burning stars, that laugh so sweetly on the bosom of the night! Sometimes I think ye pity me, as ye look down with your bright eyes into my chilly room, and that some time ye will come to warm me in your fires. To dwell among the glory of your love were all my soul would ask; and to feel your soft, warm touch would make my heart beat again to the voice of wide, all-living nature. Shine on, O blessed lamps! such as I have need of all your light; — burn on, while I lie shivering here, and strive in my slumbers to forget the cold charities of this work-a-day world! And ye, bright dreams,

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come to my haunted sleep, and give me back the angel-one death took so early from my embrace!"

And, saying this, he opened a small clasped book, and, reading a few moments from its unsoiled pages, placed it under his pillow, and then lay down to his weary, desolate slumbers.

Next morning, when the sun was gilding the spires of the surrounding churches with its molten beams, the office of one of the morning papers was in a great state of bustle and confusion, on account of some important item of business that had to be transacted before the paper was issued.

"Mr. Lamson, make all the haste you can with that type; for it's getting late, and it must be inserted. Sure payment, and no delay either."

This remark was addressed to a cadaverous, sallow-complexioned, half-respectable looking individual, of very small proportions, who was seated before a type-frame, on a very high three-legged stool.

"And you, Daniel, run to Lawson's, and bid him hurry up the press-hands, or everything will be late."

As the urchin bearing the sacred name of the Jewish prophet darted hastily out of the office, the door was darkened, and the tall, thin figure of the garret occupant entered, with a proud, though faltering and undetermined step.

Looking at the fat, aldermanic-proportioned personage who had given out the above-mentioned commands, and who was occupying the chair before the desk, he politely accosted him with, "Good-morning."

"Same to you," growled out the fat man, going on with his writing as if nothing was within sight or hearing.

"Would you please to look over this poem?" at length asked the youth, presenting his manuscript.

"Poem? Bah! we have no time to attend to such profitless stuff," returned the man, still writing; "'specially when we have plenty of other matter, that pays three times as well."

"But," resumed the youth, "I am sure you will like it. I have spent a great deal of time on it, and taken much pains."

"The more fool you! Better do something else. The world is too old to be fed on such sickly food now-a-days. *We* don't want anything of it; but, if you are mind to leave it, and it's worth anything, soon as there 's

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a place that wants filling up we 'll print it; and that 's the most we can do for you."

Turning his beautiful eyes on the heartless speaker, who went on with his task quite unconcernedly, the poet gave him a look of utter contempt, as he said, with proudly-curled lip, "Yes, I *will* leave it; — I bequeath it to you, sir, with a sincere desire that it may elevate you above the condition of the brute, into which you appear to have degenerated!"

Throwing it upon the desk, he hurried down the dusty staircase, and in a few moments stood in the cold air, not far from Saint Martin's Church. He stood for a moment, apparently undecided how to proceed; but, suddenly looking up to the blue skies, he started off in the direction of his lonely dwelling. Knocking at the door, it was opened by a prodigiously stout woman, dressed in a blue gown, tucked up at the elbows, as if she had just left her wash-tub.

The first salutation which greeted the trembling man was, "Well, mister gentleman Jack, have you got it?"

"Silence, woman!" he replied, half choked with emotion; "silence, and you shall have all you desire."

"That won't do any longer. I tell you I a'nt going to be put off any longer with that sort of payment. I want my rent, or you must pack up and be off. Did n't you say you were going to get some money to-day? and ha'nt you said the same for a month or more? It won't do; — you can't come it over me any longer!"

All this was said as the two were ascending the stairs that led to the garret; for the old woman, determined not to let one word fall short of its intended mission, had followed close on the track of the downcast lodger. The almost maddened student, sinking into a rickety chair, buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud.

"'Ta'nt any use for you to take on in that way. I want my rights, that 's all. I a'nt hard-hearted, neither, as you knows; but I can't keep house, if nobody don't pay. I 'll give you a week to settle up; and, if you don't, why then you must go." Uttering this in a very decided manner, she left the room.

Throwing himself upon the miserable bed, the young poet gave way to the wildest paroxysms of grief. He well knew the justness of the woman's

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claims, and could not condemn the severity of her appeal for what she called "her rights."

But the conduct of the editor had wounded him in the most sensitive part of his being, and he inwardly cursed the worldliness of the crowd. The shades of night settled down upon the world, as the clouds of despair lay thickly piled, in dark, rugged masses, above his shrinking soul.

The din of the street rang sharply on the frosty air, and many a sound of revelry fell on the sufferer's ear. The stars one by one crept up the walls of heaven, and threw their slanting beams through the battered casement.

At last he rose, and, with eyes red with weeping away the spirit's wretchedness, he gazed around his naked room. The pale, cold moon shone over earth, smiling, like a fair face that loves to look upon itself and say, "How beautiful hath nature made me!" though ever and anon a dark, jagged cloud would scud across its face, throwing a sombre shadow on the earth.

"Thou art very beautiful! and yet it wearies me to look upon thee, though never have I grown tired *till now* with scanning thy fair brow. I *have* felt I could gaze on thee forever; for I feel that thou art the mirror which reflects to me the attributes of the Creator, who dwells in all things, and makes all things within himself. Thou art the brightness of that heaven we hope to gain, — the grand hereafter which the soul reaches after from the cerements of the flesh! On looking at thy face, calm even amid the storm, I behold the Infinite, which thou tellest me is upward. But yet, what is all my self-denial? I was born with a nature that seeks gratification, but not beyond the pale of justice. These arms were never given to me to hug the wretchedness that is constantly at my side. Surely, with my adoration for the beautiful, some fair semblance should have been given for my worship. Surely these eyes were never meant to gaze forever, without relief, on these gloom-dripping walls, where naught but the trembling sunbeams and the timid stars look in that can be called beautiful. But why talk of beauty, when here I stand between life and death? Death! what is it? It may frighten silly maids, and turn pale the cheeks of children; but what is it to one who struggles madly for the faintest smile of Hope, and receives but the wormwood of despair?

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"Have I not sought the path of truth with burning brain? Have I not felt in every vein the cold touch of poverty, and yet shrank not in my course? But all is past now; — the gloom of dissolution gathers fast, and I stand between life and death!"

Here there was a heavy silence, broken only by the breathing of the sufferer, who paced the floor in great mental excitement.

The lamp threw a dim, blue light along the dripping walls, and flickered faintly in the current of air which streamed from the broken window. He suddenly paused in front of the casement, and gazed long and mournfully at the twinkling stars.

"It *must* be!" at length he exclaimed, in a husky voice. "Better to die than live dependent on the world's cold charity!"

Looking up to the moon, as he said this, his eye fell on a large nail driven into the wall. "That will do," he murmured, as he tested its strength; and then, walking towards the window, he recommenced his soliloquy. "I had always hoped to die where the stars could look into my fading eyes; but I'll soon be with you now, fair orbs!"

So saying, he took the cravat from his neck with perfect self-composure, made a sliding-knot, and passed it over his head.

"O, it is great to feel we care for nothing, — that nothing can check us from passing into a better life! but, like a banner thrown out upon the wind, we can give the soul to Him who called it out of nothing, assured that He will take it unto His bosom! Darkness, nothing but darkness, in the present; light, glorious light, streaming out from the skies of the future! O God! I give myself to thee. I was not made for earth; but, like a bird for the pure air of heaven, have I ever panted for thy presence!"

A loud knock at the door awoke him from his momentary madness, and aroused him to a sense of his condition, and the sin he was about to commit; and he stood there like one starting from a dream.

Again the door was struck, more forcibly than before; and at length the latchet was raised, and a tall, thin figure entered in perfect silence. Without speaking, or taking the least notice of the youth, he sat down at the table, and took from his pocket sundry papers which he placed beside him. He wore the dress peculiar to the Jewish people, with the long, flowing beard streaming over his breast.

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His age appeared to be about sixty, and his face was remarkably thin, and ghastly pale. His hair was gray, and but thinly scattered over his wrinkled forehead, which was marked by several scars.

"Good-evening, young man," he said, at length, in a deep bass that seemed, in that still, wretched place, to partake of the supernatural. "You seem to be rather low-spirited to-night. What has happened?"

"Who art thou that dares to intrude into my presence, uncalled for and unsought?" said the youth, drawing himself up to his full height. "Art come to mock my misery, or to add fresh insult to my fallen condition?"

"Nay, do not put yourself into needless alarm concerning my visit. I came to aid you."

"To aid me! Kindness seems strange to one for a long time accustomed only to insult and injury. To whom am I indebted for this visit?"

"Never mind, at present. You shall know all hereafter; only grant what I shall request of you," answered his companion. "But you are in need of immediate relief. Take this food and eat; after which, robe yourself in these garments, and follow me in what I shall relate."

Hunger is not at any time modest in its deportment, and the famished student gladly received the tempting viands, which he ate with great avidity, after which he put on the rich robes that the stranger offered him in perfect silence.

There was a dead pause for some moments, during which the youth watched the mysterious visitor with wonder mingled with alarm.

"How long have you occupied this wretched place?" asked the stranger, casting his piercing eyes round the destitute chamber.

"An eternity, if I measure time by the misery I have borne since I entered its shadow."

"But, as mortals measure their existence, by years, months and days, how long have you been here?"

"Seven months, as nearly as I can reckon it," replied the young man.

"And, before you came to this miserable abode, where did you spend your existence?" asked the old gentleman.

"In the north of Scotland," answered the other.

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"Ha! ha!" resumed his companion, "near the Black Isle; suppose we make it Chromarty!"

"Indeed! that 's the very place. But how came you in possession of my history, having never seen me until this hour?" asked the youth, rather angrily.

"Ah! there 's no accounting for one's acquisitions of knowledge in these enlightened days;" and the old gentleman smiled as he continued, "Your name, I believe, is Allan Stewart?"

The youth bowed assent, and remained silent.

"You see, my friend," said the Jew, "that I am somewhat acquainted with your affairs. I could unfold more, but will not for the present. You are poor, and destitute, — a miserable dependant on the caprices of others."

"No, sir," haughtily answered the poet, rising from his low chair. "No, sir; I am poor and destitute, as you observed, but I am *no dependant.*"

"Well, well, we 'll not quarrel about that," said the stranger; "all I require at your hands, to lift you from your present lowly position, is a simple gift, which you can easily give; — it is in this desolate room, in fact."

The youth started at this intelligence, and gazed at the few coarse materials that made up the decorations of his chamber, and answered, in a merry tone of voice, "I am sure you are welcome to anything my apartment contains; but I don't see anything here which can be of much value to you, or any one else."

"Think well before you promise; for I shall not be likely to give up my claim, when once it is in my power to enforce it," said the stranger, in a grave tone, gazing intently on the other's face, who seemed ill to comprehend his companion's conversation and mode of procedure. "There is, indeed, nothing," continued the old man, "of any value, as far as money is concerned, in your apartment, and in this world money constitutes everything worth having."

"Except," interrupted the poet, "except the hope of a better existence, — the reward of a life well spent."

"Ha! ha! ha!— a better existence! Think you there is another earth of fairer proportions than the one we now inhabit, which is wet even

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now with the tears of the millions of souls that have breathed and died, as you will some day die? Such is the philosophy of women and children, my friend, and not worthy the thoughts of grown-up men!"

The derisive manner in which this remark was made rather startled the young man, who had been accustomed from infancy to revere the Divine. True, he had not made to himself a God from the idle dreamings of an over-heated zeal; yet he had that true heart-reverence which is most acceptable to the All-Glorious.

He might have exclaimed, with Schiller, when asked concerning his religion, "That he was too religious to be of any religion at all!" He had not long to reflect, however, before his companion asked if he had resolved to comply with his request.

"If there is anything," he answered, "which I can tender to your keeping, without violating the honor of a man or the sanctity of the soul, you can command it."

"Ah, you've grown sentimental, of late!" sneered the old man. "But an hour ago, you were about to drive your soul into the dark of nothingness, and now you are talking about its sanctity!"

"I do not desire to prolong a conversation of this kind," interposed the poet. "Make known your request, and it shall be granted on the first condition."

"Some six years ago," began the Jew, in a deep, hollow voice, "you were attached to Mary Melrose, and hoped to become her husband.

"Nay, do not start so! You stood on the banks of a small stream, where you were about to part for the first time in your lives. Your grief at that separation I will not attempt to describe, for perhaps you know it best. The shades of evening fell around you, and the holy stars rose up and seemed to smile their approval of your love. But the hour passed, — you parted; you never met again. But you had a token of her love, that was to be yours till death. That token lies within this room, — it is yonder!"

The youth turned his eyes to that quarter of the room pointed out by his companion, and they fell on the gift of his dead Mary, — a small Bible, bound in red leather, and fastened by silver clasps.

Starting from his seat, he seized the sacred volume, and held it to his breast with a wild and frenzied grasp, and, looking upwards, he called

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on the spirit of his early love to look from her bright cloud, and see how well he kept his vow.

"Old man," he at length exclaimed, "this is my only earthly friend, — the only gleam shining from the flickering lamp of hope, — the only spring in the soul's desert, that has not dried. To this I turn when the sky darkens, and nature seems hiding her face in clouds. The hand of an angel has touched these leaves, and, if nothing else had made it sacred, that would be sufficient. In the darkest hours of my affliction, it has buoyed me up above the waves of despair and temptation. I vowed to keep it always, standing in the silent shadows of evening's holiest time; and the stars took note of that sad parting, and heard that whispered vow, — 'Never shall this book leave my presence till earth returns again to earth, and the spirit to the God who gave it;' and the still old woods echoed back, 'Never, never.' And while the bright sun lights the world, and memory lingers round *her* image whose beauty shames the orbs of yonder dome, *it* must be mine, — *it* must be myself. Aught else is thine, — my sweat, my blood, my brain, shall be obedient to thy will; but this small gift and I must never part! It is the only friend that murmurs peace to my almost broken heart."

"Your love is too much like madness," said the old gentleman, still smiling scornfully on his companion, who stood aloof, grasping the treasure firmly. "Think you the object of such senseless worship cares for it one whit? No; Heaven neither knows nor cares about mortal affairs. Why, then, deny yourself the pleasures of this life, because, in a weak hour, you pledged a weaker girl that you would bend the knee at no other shrine? The heart of man was made to hold fifty loves, if need be. For a mere bauble, I offer you wealth, honor, power. Such an offer heaven itself could scarcely make. What say you? Do you pant for earthly renown, or are you content to drag out a worm-like existence among the herd, your brothers?"

"Could you pour the wealth of the Indies at my feet, and give me what is coveted more than honest renown, still would I not part, for one instant, with this simple record of the past!"

This was said with such a determined tone, that any other attempt at barter seemed impossible to the Jew; consequently he took another course, and strove with great subtlety to prove that he admired the

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youth's determination not to part with this token of his early love. "But," said he, after a long argument, "suppose you take from it those decorations, — the outward trappings of pride and earthly pomp, which, in themselves being worldly, have no claim on a book so sacred, — and give me *them;* and then I will bestow on you, in return, all that human nature craves. Power, wealth, love, and glory, — all shall be yours. Men shall bow down and reverence your name; so give me the clasps from your casket of truth."

"Be ye a man, or a spirit sent to tempt my soul, I know not; but I defy your subtlest power! I have a shield that you cannot penetrate. Mind and adoration of the truth meet, like lovers, whom to see each other must satisfy.

"Poor as I am, yet in possession of my spirit-love there is a fulness of bliss, like silence on a summer sea. Where we take one feather from the turtle's wing, it lacks that *one* from being *perfect.* If from the bright star-coronet upon the night's broad brow we take one silver ray, its former splendor is that one ray less.

"So with my vow; — let it fail in but one atom, and it will be imperfect.

"If thy mission be good and friendly, take aught else I have, and be welcomed to a place in my heart; but if thou art one of those dark fiends who prowl round the unguarded pathways of the soul, I bid thee begone; for thou couldst as soon tear thunder from its Maker's hand as master me or mine. It is my love, my hope, my spirit, that will keep me from falling. Be content, and leave me. And thou, fair idol of my thoughts, whisper unto my thirsty ear that thou art keeping watch over me, in this hour of trial; for sin, and sorrow and temptation, flee before thee, as the mist from bright sunlight.

"Dear wert thou on this earth, when love said timidly that thou wert mine; and yet thou art not less dear, now that thou watchest me from heaven. Speak to me! It was death that hushed thy lips, and does his finger rest there still? O, let me come to thy bosom!"

The morning following his visit to the newspaper office, the sun arose and smiled on the chilly earth, that seemed in that glorious light like a spirit lulled upon an angel's lap. The winds were all hushed, and the

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clouds stood motionless round the glowing orb of heat and life, whose beams shone warmly into the little garret.

A stray beam fell upon the sleeper's tear-wet face, and he awoke from a restless slumber.

His first act, after gazing confusedly on the dreary scene, was to seize the little Bible, and kiss it fervently, exclaiming, with the great tears rolling down his fading cheeks, "Thank God, it is a dream!"

A rap at the door aroused him still more, and, on bidding the applicant enter, the door opened, and the figure of the landlady presented itself.

"I hope you will excuse me, sir," she said, in her harsh voice, "but there 's a gentleman that 'll pay every week as wants this room; so you 'll have to find out some other place by to-morrow. I told you you might stop till next week; but, you see, business must be attended to. I 'm sorry, but I can't help it. You 'll have to give up your key to-morrow."

A deep sigh alone escaped the youth, in answer to this cruel announcement; and he turned his face towards the wall, as if by so doing he could shut out the desolate picture.

"What 's this, mister gentleman? Did n't you hear, or don't you mean to go?" continued the indignant housekeeper, in a very loud key.

"You shall be obeyed," answered the stricken one, in a faint, broken voice; "you shall be obeyed;" and, with a very stately step, the worthy dame left the apartment, and closed the door heavily after her.

"Good-morning, Bryant," said a very benevolent-looking, stout gentleman, entering the office of the morning paper, at an early hour, the next day.

"Same to you, sir," responded the man at the desk. "Not quite so cold this morning as it was, eh?"

"No, but cold enough for those who are destitute of fire and clothing," returned the other, taking up the paper. "I have come to learn the name of the writer of this poem; — the finest one I have seen since Byron's time."

Casting an indifferent glance on the page, the editor saw the verses alluded to were those that Stewart had left, the day before; and he answered, carelessly, "O, they 're from the pen of the cleverest young

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man in London; but he 's poor as a church-mouse, and can't write anything but poetry. I pity him; I do, upon my word!"

"And may I inquire what you gave him for it?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I did n't give him anything. He left it here for insertion, the day before yesterday, without making a charge; but I intended to send him a half-sovereign."

"Where does he live? I should like to know him. Such a man ought not to be left to struggle with want. Suppose you send for him on some business pretext, as he would doubtless be sensitive about being relieved by strangers."

"Yes, I will, if you wish it. John, go to Stewart's, and tell him I wish to see him about his last poem," shouted the proprietor to a sickly-looking boy, who was warming himself before a fire, at the further end of the room.

"Yes, sir," replied the lad, darting out of the door, and down the dirty streets, as though, like Mercury, he had wings upon his feet.

A half-hour elapsed, and he returned, with the intelligence that Mr. Stewart was ill, and could not come.

"That 's unlucky," said the friend of genius, stroking his chin. "Bryant, what do you say,—suppose we take a cab, and drive over? Let 's see, where is it?"

"King's Road."

"Well, that 's not far. Come, put on your great-coat, and let 's be off."

"John, call a cab," returned the other. "One of Hansom's; they are the quickest. I hardly know how to spare time to go, Mr. Hardy," he added, putting on his gloves; "but I suppose you 'll make it up in some way."

The vehicle was already at the door, and, entering it, they were soon on their way to the poet's dwelling.

"Here we are," said Mr. Hardy, alighting. "How much, Mr. Cabman?"

"Two shillings, sir."

"There. And now, Bryant, knock at the door."

The door was opened by the lady whom we have mentioned before; but her face wore an uncommonly serious expression.

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"Does Mr. Stewart reside here?" asked Mr. Hardy.

"He did," returned the woman, in a trembling voice; "but he has gone."

"Whither?" asked the benevolent stranger.

"To heaven, I hope, sir," returned the lady; "for he was a great martyr here. He died about a quarter of an hour ago."

"Lead us to his chamber, my friend," said Mr. Hardy, advancing up the steps.

The woman led the way to the apartment of the dead man.

A slight shudder passed over the faces of both men, as they entered. There, on a mere bundle of rags, lay the body of the long-tried, long-suffering poet.

Clasped to his breast, even in the death-throe, lay the small Bible, with its silver clasps. Not a feature of his beautiful face was disturbed; and the smile rested round his lips, as if kindled at the kiss of his dead angel.

There had been gloom and darkness for him on earth; but the heaven-sunshine glows brightest over the brows where the earth-shadows have fallen most heavily.

Some such thought seemed passing through Mr. Hardy's mind, as they stood there, those three, alone in the silence, with each other, and the coldly-beautiful face of the dead.

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THE MAIDEN'S WAIL.

BY OSCAR G. HUGHAN.

Blow, blow, ye winds, ye cold north winds,
Through the beech-tree stark and old,
And scatter the clouds, which, like wondering hinds,
Look down on the frozen wold!
Unbridle yourselves, and sweep from the hill;
Storm and tempest, why keep ye still?
Let your banners be unfurled,
And gallop your steeds o'er the reeling world!
Hear a poor maiden,
With sorrow laden,
And rend the oak, and shiver the ash,
Shout to the forest, and bid it quake,
For thou art coming, with mighty dash,
To make it totter for my sake!
There was a time I loved to feel
The breath of evening in my hair;
But grief has set his jagged seal
Upon my heart, and left it there!
O, woe is me!
For the roaring sea
Is not half so false as the heart can be!
Look not down so pale and scornful,
Poor, sick moon! You and I
Both have cause for being mournful;
Get thee up into the sky,

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Or I'll drag thy silver cars
Down to earth, to stay with me,
While the pretty fire-eyed stars
Bathe their foreheads in the sea.
Woe is me!
O, Mary mother, send white wings,
To fan the flame that's dying here!
Up to thy breast the spirit springs,
To pour its sobbings in thine ear.
Ha! ha! the white, cold snow
Kisses my brow, and hangs in my hair,
Like the diamonds there,
When love was kind and true,
And life was young and new!

Who bid the mastiff howl
Over the tomb?
Who bid the speckled owl
Shriek through the gloom?
The raven may croak, and whet his beak
On the drenchéd skin of my wasted cheek,
But all else must quiet be,
While I sleep 'neath the witch-elm tree!
Woe, woe is me!
Thou art a noble, stalwart rock,
And shakest thy beard at the whirlwind's shock,
Around thy head the thunder sleeps,
And the red-hot bolt of the lightning leaps;
The King of Storm on thy iron breast
Speaks to the world, and breaks its rest;
The howling billow, with hollow sound,
Cowers at thy feet, like a baffled hound;
The sky looks down on thee forever,
And its glances from thine no arm can sever,
And, when the blast of the midnight hour
Pours on thy head its terrible power,

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And the lone moonbeam
From the haunted stream
Slinks away
To its eyrie gray,
I must stay with my grief alway!
I cannot feel the biting cold;
My blood is boiling through my veins;
Though o'er the shepherd's huddled fold
The ghost of winter shakes its reins,
And the little bird has shut his wing,
While the tear is frozen in his eye;
And when to-morrow's light shall spring,
All hushed will be its melody!

I remember the time when my heart was light,
And fell asleep with the flowers at night;
When voices came to my listening ear,
Like seraph-tones from a distant sphere.
Shades of the dead, if ye tarry here,
Wash your hands in this burning tear;
Embalm yourselves in these dying sighs,
And bear them away to your native skies!
Here are flowers I gathered late last eve;
Take them, a garland fair to weave;
Daisies, and cowslips, and daffodils,
And violets plucked from the woodland hills;
Foxglove and eglantine, braided well,
With rose, and buds from the sweet blue-bell!
But, before ye go,
Cover my woe
From the gaze of men,
In some darksome den,
Or lay me to rest
On the ocean's breast,
Where naught but the tone
Of the wind-shaken shells

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Anear me shall moan,
To sever your spells!
O, why did I love with a love that told
Of death, as soon as his heart grew cold?
But he loves me yet;
He can never forget
The stream by the mountain-side;
But he died! he died!
Though they say he lives, and laughs at my woe!
O, for a winding-sheet of snow,
And a bed in the freezing river!

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TO THE LOVED AND LOST.

BY CHARLES L. FISK, JR.

We knew thee well, and marked thy feeble step,
And saw thy wasted form sink down to earth;
We paused, amid the long, wide multitude
Of hopes and fears, and breathed out, with thy friends,
One heart-felt wish! 'T was no prophetic eye
That watched the dread disease, and summed the span
Of thy cherished life's existence!
The break
Of every morn rose fresh upon thee,
To bid thee welcome to an early grave;
While Nature, tender to her sacred charge,
Tolled the last summons for her native dust!
And thou art gone! Gone where the yellow leaf
Rustles in chorus to the cold, bleak winds,
And chilling Winter binds the slumbering sod.
Gone! and thine own hearth-stone, forsaken, knows
Save but in memory; no song, no tread,
To while away the solemn hours of night!
When thy sad wife, in silent prayer, invokes
The blessing of that higher power, and feels
'T is God who doeth all things well!
What dreams
Have fled away! In the dim past lieth
The unsound reckoning of life, as on
The beach rolls back the tide of ocean's storms!

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And yet 'tis well! The flood of woe that hangs
Its tragic pall o'er things unseen and known
Clouds not the future, nor removes our faith.
We would not call thee back! The spirit-land,
That speaks its volumes to the mourner's breast,
And cheers the mortal in his path of woe,
Reanimates our thoughts, and hides the griefs
And earthly joys, that vanish while they live!
Wear'st thou the signet of the blest? Dost feel
The knowledge of that perfect bliss and peace
Which blessed ones *may* know in heaven above?
Methinks thy soul transplanted into thoughts
Of peaceful beauty,—thoughts of power divine,
Which shone on Galilee, and on the banks
Of Jordan's sacred stream;—sweet thoughts of him
Who rode the troubled storm of life, and said,
With goodly voice, "Come and partake with me
Of living waters!"

And so, farewell! No more
Thy manly voice shall plead that cause which claims
Its highest resurrection in the name
Of freedom's dearest right! No more for aye
Shall friendship feel thy influence, or ask
The righteous task, to give thy simple mite.
But in *another* sphere shall all the tones
Of peace, and love, and everlasting truth,
Reverberate o'er earth's unnumbered wrongs,
And bid thee, with the gathered hosts redeemed,
Be happy in the justness of a true reward!

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WOMAN'S LOVE.

BY THE LYNN BARD.

O, WOMAN'S love is a sweet, sweet thing,
And a bonny thing is she!
With her graceful form, and her trusting heart,
And her virgin purity!

She was given to man, in his pilgrimage,
In his joys and griefs to share;
To be unto him as a recompense
For the loss of his Eden fair.

O, woman's love is a sweet, sweet thing,
And a bonny thing is she;
With her loving eye, and her faithful heart,
And her virgin purity!

They may talk of their gold, and the glories of arms,
Of the wonders and pride of art;
But the sweetest thing that the world e'er saw
Is the love of a virgin heart!

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THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE.

BY GEORGE S. RAYMOND.

"There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will." — SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER I.—THE WIDOW'S HOME.

ONE beautiful afternoon, in the month of August, some fifteen years since, I was traversing, on horseback, a rough, rugged road, which followed very nearly the tortuous windings of the Ohio river, about eight miles below the beautiful little town of Burlington, when the animal suddenly started at some noise in the bushes near the road, breaking his girth, and flinging me, saddle and all, with considerable violence, to the ground.

I was partially stunned by the fall, and for several minutes wholly unable to stand; while my horse galloped away down the road I had been pursuing, and in a few moments disappeared over a slight eminence a few hundred yards from the spot where I had fallen.

The road, at the point where my mishap occurred, ran through a dark, gloomy piece of woods, with no signs of a habitation in sight; and, as it was a highway apparently but little travelled, I argued, as I regained my feet, that if I would have the wormwood and vinegar which I felt I needed for my bruised shoulder and sprained ankle, and recover my truant horse, I must, of necessity, go look for them; for there was little prospect of either coming to me, if I remained there a week.

It was a rather painful kind of locomotion, my hobbling along on a rude crutch, formed from a young sapling which I had cut with my knife; but I managed to gain the elevation in the road after several minutes'

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wearisome toil, heightened by the inconvenience and weight of the saddle, which I had determined to carry till I came to a house, provided I should be fortunate enough to reach one before sunset.

Having passed the summit of the hill, I soon came in sight of a small white cottage, not more than a quarter of a mile further on; and, halfway between myself and the house, I beheld my runaway horse being led back towards me by a woman accompanied by two children, — a boy and girl, apparently twins, and not more than five years old.

Hastening forward, I soon met the female, and for more than five minutes I stood there, in breathless wonder and admiration, listening to the low, musical tones of her bird-like voice, as she informed me that, having seen the horse dash furiously up to her gate, it immediately occurred to her that his rider had been thrown, and perhaps seriously injured, back in the woods; whereupon she resolved to lead him back, and offer her assistance, if assistance was necessary.

"Are you much hurt, sir?" she inquired, in an earnest tone, as a shade of deep anxiety flitted across her features, far more beautiful than any I had ever seen.

There was a sort of magic in her voice that made me forget the pain of my severe bruises, as I flung aside my crutch and replied that it was only a slight shock, from which I should soon recover; and then, with her assistance, I proceeded to re-saddle my horse, which I mounted with considerable difficulty, and rode slowly on towards the cottage, at which the woman insisted upon my stopping and passing the night, as there was no inn for several miles further on.

It needed little persuasion to induce me to accept her earnest invitation; and within an hour from the time of my mishap I was very comfortably seated at tea with my hostess and her three children, — the two who had accompanied her when she came to meet me, and the third, a beautiful girl about ten years old, who came in from an errand to a neighbor's soon after I entered the cottage.

The woman herself was most exquisitely fair, and so graceful and accomplished that I was not a little astonished when, in the course of the conversation, she informed me that she had been born and reared there, in the wilds of Ohio, without ever having been beyond the limits of the county where she was born in her life, or received any advantages

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of education other than those offered at a common country school, which she had attended during the winter season only, previous to her marriage.

She was not yet thirty; and ever since her twin children were a year old she had been a widow, — or, at least, widowed; for she informed me that, four years previously, her husband, being much in need of a hundred dollars to make the last payment on their little farm, and finding it impossible to get even ten of it by any other means, had accepted an offer of a chief mate's berth in a ship loading in New Orleans for Havre, and commanded by a man with whom he had sailed for several years previous to his marriage.

Six months after he left home, Mrs. Everett received a letter from her husband, enclosing two bank-notes, one for one hundred and one for fifty dollars, together with the assurance that, after one more voyage to Europe, he should quit the sea forever, and return to his loved family.

Another month passed, and there came a letter, dated at New Orleans, two days before the ship was to sail for London, containing half of a twenty-dollar note, which Mr. Everett informed his wife he had just received as a part of his month's advance, and which he sent in that way for safety, — there having been several recent cases of mail robbery on that route, in which large sums had been abstracted from letters. The other half of the note, he informed her, should be mailed on the day he sailed from New Orleans. But from that time forth she had never heard aught from the remainder of the bill, or her husband either, further than that the ship to which he was attached had been reported as burned at sea; and as one of her boats, containing a portion of the crew, had been picked up several days after the disaster, they declared that the captain and officers remained by the burning ship while they were in sight, and it was supposed they had perished there.

After having informed me of all these particulars, and, further, that by the strictest economy and the most unremitting industry she had been enabled to keep herself and children beyond the reach of want, — cultivating several acres of ground with her own hand, and paying for such work as she was unable to perform by spinning and weaving during the winter, — the widow arose from the table, and brought from the bureau a small box, which she opened, and took therefrom half of a twenty-dollar bank-note, which she placed in my hands, saying, as she did so, —

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"You may think me silly, and foolishly superstitious, sir; but I wish you to keep this bit of paper, and carry it always about you. Three nights since, I had a most singular dream, in which I saw you as plainly as I see you now. You came here, passed the night under my roof,—and when you went away I made the same request that I now make of you. You took it, and departed; and then, after a long period, you came back; and, when I asked you for the half of the note, you informed me that you had given it to my husband in some foreign country, and that he had promised to bring it back to me."

There was something so earnest and impressive in her voice and manner that her words seemed like inspiration, and I placed the moiety of the twenty-dollar note in my pocket-book, with a solemn promise to return it to her, provided we ever met again, unless I might chance to meet the legitimate proprietor of the other half, in the person of her lost husband.

I passed the night at the cottage; and having partaken of an early breakfast on the following morning, I resumed my journey towards Cincinnati, where I embarked for New Orleans, and two months later I was on my way to South America, of which country I was a resident at the time.

CHAPTER II.—THE ENCOUNTER.

It was one of the most singular accidents in the world that sent me to the "Angel," one of the first hotels in Liverpool, instead of the "Albion," the house at which I had intended to make my temporary home, upon my arrival in England, more than two years after my little adventure in Ohio.

"Beg pardon, captain," said a genteelly-dressed young man, laying his hand upon my arm, just as I was about to enter the coach for the Albion, within an hour after we got moored in "Waterloo Dock,"—"Beg pardon, sir; but did n't you lose a trunk of clothes, when you were up the Clyde, about four years since?"

"Yes, I did;—a small black trunk, filled mostly with wearing apparel, and containing several trinkets and articles of jewelry."

"Exactly, sir; and you will find your property at the 'Angel.'"

"How came it there?"

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"Why, sir, it was taken from the thief who stole it, and who has been off to Van Diemen's Land these three years. Mrs. Jones, the landlady of the Angel, was at the police station when the trunk was opened; and recognizing the articles, many of them, as yours, she had the trunk taken home, intending to have sent it out to Brazil to you by her nephew, who was about to sail for Rio; but, somehow, it was forgotten, and has remained there ever since."

"Very well," I said; "tell Mrs. Jones that I will call round in a day or two, get my property, and pay her for taking care of it for me;" and again I was about to step into the coach, when there went up a confused shout from the gangway of a ship directly astern of ours, and, running to the spot, I soon discovered a boy struggling in the water with several articles, and among them a beautiful silver-bound writing-desk floating near him.

It only needed some one to lead the way, and there were twenty stout fellows ready to follow; and, within ten seconds after I plunged into the water, there were a score of others paddling about in the dock, like so many water-dogs.

The boy — a little fellow, not ten years old — was soon landed in safety, together with the various articles which he had been bringing on shore from the ship when he was crowded off the stage by some careless stevedores.

I was about to turn away towards my coach, when my eye happened to fall upon the desk, which, even as I had glanced at it in the water, looked familiar to me; and now I recognized it beyond a doubt; for on a silver plate, in the centre of the lid, was engraved my own name.

Five years previously, I had given that desk to my most intimate friend, a British naval officer, at Montevideo; and as I had heard he was dead, — having been accidentally killed, in England, within a year after I presented him with the desk, — I naturally felt some curiosity as to the present owner.

On questioning the boy, I learned that he belonged to the ship, which had but just arrived from India; and that the desk and other articles were the property of the captain, who had sent him down to bring them up to the "Angel," where he was staying.

Fearing that the captain might be disposed to scold the little fellow

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for his unlucky bath, and having, as I have already observed, some curiosity as to what kind of a man the present owner of the desk might be, besides remembering that I had some property of my own at the "Angel," I resolved to change my destination; and, taking up the dripping boy with his water-soaked load in the coach, we left the dock for the hotel.

The boy pointed out his commander to me; and, after having explained the lad's mishap in a way calculated to shield him from blame, I entered into conversation with the landlady about my clothes, while the captain — a bluff, good-looking man, in the neighborhood of thirty-five — proceeded to unlock his desk, and spread its contents out on the table to dry.

When the desk was nearly emptied, I observed him open a small secret till, with which I was familiar, and take from it the half of a bank-note, which he seemed very careful of; and just as he was about to place it in his pocket-book, I laid my hand upon his arm.

"I beg pardon, sir," I said; "but will you permit me to look at that half of the bank-note?"

"Certainly, sir," he replied, with a sad smile, as he placed it in my hand.

A single glance assured me that it was the missing half of the note which I had received from the Widow Everett, and which I still had in my possession.

Without a word, I drew forth my pocket-book, and taking from it the moiety of the bill I had so long carried, I placed them together, before the captain, on the table.

For full five minutes he stood there beside me, first with his face as pale as death, and the next instant flushed to his very temples, while twenty times he essayed to speak, as he grasped my arm convulsively; but at each successive effort he only hissed forth some husky, inarticulate sound, that had nothing human in it.

At length, as if by a superhuman effort, he gasped —

"For Heaven's sake, tell me how you came by that half of the note!"

"First have the kindness to favor me with your name, captain, if you please."

"James Everett, sir; — there is no dishonor connected with it, and I am not ashamed to avow it under any circumstances."

"And that desk, sir, — from whom did you receive that?"

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"From Lieutenant Southern, sir, who had it as a present from an intimate friend of his, a Brazilian officer, at Montevideo. At his death, which occurred about five years since, Lieutenant Southern gave me the desk, with a request that I would return it to the man from whom he received it; but the ship to which I belonged at that time was sent to India, and I have never been to South America since. Do you know the man whose name is engraved on that plate?" he inquired, glancing at my green coat and naval buttons, bearing the crown and anchor, and D. P. II., the initials of Don Pedro Segundo.

"I do, sir;"—and I handed him my card. "And now, Captain Everett, I will inform you that I received that bit of bank paper from the hands of your wife, Mrs. Laura Everett."

"When and where did you see her?" he inquired eagerly.

"In Ohio,—in the very home where you left her, more than seven years ago. It is something over two years since an act of Providence made me acquainted with your wife;"—and I related in detail every incident connected with my adventure, and all the particulars relative to his family, and the circumstances under which I had received the half-note.

He listened very calmly to my narration, and then informed me that, within two hours after he mailed that last letter to his wife in New Orleans, he had received one from her brother, covering another from herself, both informing him, in the most explicit manner, that there was no occasion for him to return to Ohio, as his wife was about to leave for Michigan, with a man whom she had always loved, and who would always think more of her than to go off and leave her for a whole year at a time.

He sailed from New Orleans with a determination of never setting his foot upon the soil of North America again. On the outward passage the ship caught fire, and the crew left her in the two boats, abandoning the captain and himself to their fate.

They left the burning wreck on a hastily-constructed raft; and, after drifting about for several days, the captain perished with hunger, and he was himself almost dead, when he was rescued by a passing homeward-bound Indiaman, and carried to London, where he shipped as chief mate of a South American trader, which was soon after put into the India

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business under his command, and where he had remained ever since, without ever having heard, in all that time, one single word from his wife, whom he believed false to him.

There was an interval of the most profound silence after the captain had concluded his story, broken, at length, by his asking me, in a tone of startling emphasis, if I should go to the United States.

"I shall sail for New York in about fifteen days," I replied.

"And I shall go with you, sir," he exclaimed. "Will you accompany me to Ohio?"

"Most willingly, Captain Everett."

"O, thank you,—thank you, my friend!" he cried, wringing my hands in the very excess of his gratitude. "I had thought that there was no more happiness for me on earth; but my angel wife will again bless me with her smiles, and make my home almost a heaven."

CHAPTER III.—THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

I HAD kept my promise made to Captain James Everett, there in the hotel, in England; and it was almost dark, on a calm, quiet evening in October, that we stepped ashore from the steamer in which we had taken passage at New Orleans.

Our landing was made something more than a mile from the wanderer's cottage-home; and having disposed of our baggage in a farm-house, situated near the bank of the river, we set out on foot, after having been informed by the farmer that the Widow Everett lived the first house up the road, and that herself and family were enjoying excellent health.

A few minutes' walk brought us in sight of the cottage, or, rather, the light emanating from the windows next the road; and so great was my companion's impatience, excited by once more beholding his loved home after so long an absence, that he started forward at a run, closely followed by myself; and when we arrived at the little gate, opening into the rustic lawn in front of the cottage, we were both almost entirely out of breath.

No word was spoken by either of us; but the sound of the gate falling to against the post, as we entered, aroused the family, whom we could see, through the open door, preparing to sit down to supper; and forth

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to meet us came a sylph-like form, whom I almost instantly recognized as the beautiful girl, the widow's eldest child.

The recognition was mutual; and a quick cry of joy, as she sprang forward and grasped my hand, brought her mother to the door. She, too, knew me; and, after bidding me welcome, she inquired, in almost a whisper,

"The note, sir; — did you ever hear of him?"

Without a word in reply, I pointed towards my companion, and — she was answered.

For a space of, it may be, ten seconds, they stood there, confronting each other in silence, — the erring, wandering husband, and the patient, angel wife; and then, with outstretched arms, and the quick-uttered exclamations of "James, my husband!" — "Laura, my own blessed wife!" the long-separated were the next moment reünited; and there ensued a scene of joy and gladness which, if angels can weep, would have caused them to shed tears of real happiness, as they hovered above, and blessed the fond greeting of two true hearts, whom fate had so long held asunder, and Providence so singularly restored to each other's arms.

Love's welcome being at length ended, we entered the cottage, where, having partaken of the frugal but bountiful repast, we gathered around the cheerful hearth, — my friend beside his noble, true-hearted wife, with his youngest-born, the beautiful twins, one upon either knee, and the gentle Laura, her mother's namesake and perfect miniature, standing beside him, resting her head upon his shoulder, — and then we learned from the lips of Mrs. Everett, what had been a mystery to us until then, namely, the origin and authorship of the two letters which Everett had received in New Orleans, purporting to have been written by his wife and her brother.

At first, he had some doubts of their being genuine; but he was so familiar with the handwriting of his wife and brother-in-law, that all doubt upon the subject was soon put to flight, and the resolve was at once taken, which, being carried out, had rendered his wife an almost heart-broken *widow*, himself a gloomy, restless wanderer, his helpless children fatherless, and all of them very unhappy, for seven long, weary years.

But the mystery of the letters was explained.

Some five months previous to our arrival, a merchant, named Maynard,

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— a bachelor, who had been doing business, for more than ten years, in the neighborhood, — was arrested and brought to trial for an extensive forgery on the bank, at Portsmouth; and, after his sentence to the penitentiary, he confessed, among numerous other acts of villany, to having written those letters to Everett, foreseeing the event which actually occurred; — only the wretch had calculated that, after the duped husband had left the country, he should prevail upon his wife to sue out a divorce and marry himself. This he had actually endeavored to do; but his proposition was rejected with scorn and the contempt it deserved, by the true-hearted woman, who, even after having become assured that her husband was really dead, still adhered to her determination of never bestowing her hand or heart upon another.

Captain Everett had been eminently successful during his command of the Indiaman, and had brought home with him a fortune, which precluded the necessity of his ever being obliged to brave old ocean's storms again; and, if love and wealth can be a guarantee of earthly happiness, theirs was the most ample assurance of future bliss.

"I consider that fall from your horse, just over there in the woods, nothing less than the hand of Providence directing you to my house; as otherwise you would have rode on past, and I never should have seen you," remarked Mrs. Everett, one morning, after I had been about a week at the cottage.

"And the half-note which you gave me was the fore-finger of the same hand," I replied, laughing.

"And the invisible thrust that launched my cabin-boy overboard, in Liverpool, must have been given with both hands of Providence," added Captain Everett.

"And the writing-desk?" said little Laura.

"The stolen trunk, at the Angel?" chimed in James, the boy-twin.

"The two pieces of paper?" lisped the curly-headed Ella.

"All fingers of Providence, my dears," exclaimed Mrs. Everett, with the great round tear-drops glistening in either eye, as she passed around the breakfast-table, imprinting a kiss of pure love upon each upturned cheek. "All these were but the unerring fingers of Providence, my children, pointing our dear friend here to your father, and him home once more to happiness, and the arms of those he has ever loved."

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THE PASSAGE OF ARMS.

BY J. H. A. BONE.

"The heralds left their pricking up and down,
Now ringen trumpets loud and clarion.
There is no more to say, but east and west,
In go the spears sadly in the rest.
In goeth the sharp spear into the side,—
Then see men who can just and who can ride." — CHAUCER.

I.

In fresh green meads with daisies spangled o'er,
Yielding their moisture to the morning sun,
The tiny spider of the field his tour
From blade to blade of herbage had begun,
And many a glistening dew-gemmed web had spun;
Pale, azure moths were fluttering feebly round,
And chirping grasshoppers full many a one;
The sluggish earth-worm crept forth from its mound,
And trailed itself along upon the moistened ground.

II.

The towers of the Chateau Josselin
Crowned the green summit of the hill hard by,
And through the rising cloud of vapor dim
Appeared fair Vannes' towers and steeples high,
Now visible, now hidden from the eye;
Till, like a veil by giant hands withdrawn,
The shrouding fog in heavy folds rolled by,
And tower, steeple and fair grassy lawn,
Basked in the sunny smile of the unclouded dawn.

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III.

Forth from the town, and from the chateau's towers,
Rode many a gallant knight on charger good.
Crushing beneath their tread the fair field-flowers,
They gently moved to where a banner stood,
Marking a hasty palisade of wood,
Which folded in part of the verdant field;
Weapons were there, betokening scenes of blood, —
Long, steel-tipped lances, and bright-polished shield,
And huge cross-hilted swords, for combatants to wield.

IV.

The sanguinary war at length was o'er:
England and France no longer met in hate.
The returning warrior found an open door
Where culverins frowned death on him of late.
As he approached unto the fastened gate,
The hills no longer echoed din of arms,
Or shout of foemen rushing on their fate:
Friendship and peace now spread around their charms,
And gone from plain and tower were battle's fierce alarms.

V.

The foes who late, in mortal struggle twined,
Breathed deadly hatred in each other's face,
Now, meeting at one board with aspect kind,
Strove who should do the other greater grace,
Bearing of their late enmity no trace;
Or if, like brothers, they their force should try
With tilting lance, or with the unspiked mace,
No rage or enmity gleams from the eye
Of those who try their skill, or stand applauding by.

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VI.

A company of knights, of English birth,
Who late had fought among the Breton band,
Attended by full many a squire of worth,
Had journeyed many days for Cherbourg's strand,
Whence they might cross to their own native land.
And as a pledge no unexpected harms
Should happen to them from some treacherous hand,
Some knights, late foes, now brethren dear in arms,
Rode side by side to aid, should they hear strife's alarms.

VII.

Of English knights, there was Fitzwarren good;
Harlestone, who proved himself of mighty hand;
Clinton, whose veins were filled with noble blood,
And Burley, whose strong arm and trenchant brand
Had made full many a foeman bite the sand.
And many valiant, well-armed squires came
With the good knights who formed the noble band,
Eager to win themselves a gallant name,
And claim a niche within the enduring walls of Fame.

VIII.

These were the knights who from the city's gate
Came pricking o'er the green and flowery mead,
To meet the gallant warriors riding straight
From Josselin's towers, with e'er increasing speed;
Those were French nobles, famed for many a deed
On blood-stained field and in the peaceful dance;
Barrois de Barres, a gallant knight at need,
Count de la Marche, the Constable of France,
And squires with strong arms and an ever-restless glance.

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IX.

That morn they met, each one on his good steed,
A deed of arms between two squires to see;
Stout champions, who had oft-times won the meed
Of noble bearing and good chivalry,
Though it was never yet their lot to be
Placed foot to foot upon one bloody field,
Till, meeting by a chance, they did agree
To try upon this morn, with spear and shield,
Who to the other should the champion's honor yield.

X.

Brave Nicholas Clifford was the Briton styled,
A noble and a truly valiant name;
And he who bore it never had defiled
His olden 'scutcheon with a blot of shame,
But added honors every day could claim.
His adversary, gallant John Boucmel,
Had never yet incurred a word of blame
From the good knight with whom 't was his to dwell,
Count de la Marche, who loved his faithful squire well.

XI.

The knights are met, the combatants are placed,
Each with a polished shield and deadly spear, —
"See, gallant squires, you be not now disgraced
With needless cruelty or coward fear,
And that you use no practices unfair."
The trumpets sound the signal for the fight,
Each battling foeman lowers his glittering spear;
Bending across his horse's neck, each knight
Looks on the approaching strife with manifest delight.

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XII.

They meet, and stagger, as the sudden stroke
Rings audibly upon each mailéd breast;
The ashen-hilted spears are rudely broke,
Unable they to bear so hard a test.
One spear-head on the mangled turf doth rest,
The other, by its master planted well,
Has pierced through tunic and steel-plated vest,
And now, with death upon its point, doth dwell
Deep in the manly heart of valiant John Boucmel!

XIII.

From its too fatal seat they pluck the spear;
In purple stream flows forth the gory flood.
Before his eyes the holy cross they rear, —
His dying gaze sees not the emblem good;
But still he grasps the splintered shaft of wood.
"On, brethren, on!" with quivering breath, he said,
As if upon the battle-field he stood;
Then drooped upon his breast his steel-capped head,
And his untaméd soul from earth forever fled.

XIV.

Ah! who Count de la Marche's grief might tell,
When thus he saw the squire dead and cold?
Down on the turf beside the corpse he fell,
And wept he like a child, that warrior bold,
And the dead squire's hand in his would hold.
All mourned to see, but chiefly he whose hand
Had all unmeaningly the death-knell tolled.
Sadly they turned away, that gallant band,
And left, ere evening came, the Frenchman's fatal land.

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CLIFTON ROLLINSFORD.

BY EFFIE AFTON.

CHAPTER I.

'T WAS a bachelor's apartment, as one might easily perceive, by the air of desolate grandeur that pervaded it, despite its richness. There was a low, richly-carved French bedstead, spread with a snow-white covering; there were superb *fauteuils*, and sofas of crimson velvet; an inlaid writing-desk, and dressing-table of ivory, and damask curtains drooping their heavy folds to the gorgeously-colored Turkey carpet. And the sun this morning threw its golden beams into the room; but yet there was a chilliness out-door sunshine could not dispel. Amid all this display of wealth, there seemed something wanting to impart warmth to the brightness. What was it?

Clifton Rollinsford, the occupant, was evidently very busy just now, as his movements, the articles around him, and several open and partially-filled trunks, plainly attested. He worked with the air of one determined, at least, to despatch his business with speed; and one after another his trunks were filled, until the last one was closed, locked, and labelled. Having summoned a waiter, he bade him have the trunks taken to the south wharf, to go on board the bark Helen, bound for San Francisco. The servant bowed, and retired; and Rollinsford, lighting a cigar, threw himself into a luxurious arm-chair, elevated his feet upon a small ottoman, and seemed to sink into a revery. Then a porter came and removed the luggage, and as Rollinsford's eyes rested on the luxuries surrounding him, he sighed. "O," cried he, "white, downy pillows! there 'll be many a hard and thorny one 'neath this poor head

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ere it may press your like again! But, then, it 's from choice I abjure all these luxuries. I 'm sick of all the allurements of fashion and pleasure; they pall upon my senses. I 'm tired of dwelling a *nothing* in this jostling crowd. Ah, me! Who thinks of Clifton Rollinsford? Nobody, save my boarding-master on pay-day, and good old Uncle Weber, perhaps; and — but, no, *she* never does; — and what if she did? Could a *woman's* thoughts satisfy me, or *her* wishes influence and restrain me? I 'd blush to own such weakness. No, no! I must have fame, I must have power, glorious power, and there 's no chance of rising here. Where such crowds are striving for repute, and urging claims far superior to mine, I could at best be no more than *mediocre*, and *that* I 'll never be. *Something* or *nothing*, is my motto! Thank fortune for my pride! There 's a field in California for the youthful aspirant, and I 'll go there. I 'll do all I can do, and — yes, it must be so, — victory is for the brave!"

Thus saying, he started up, and drawing aside a curtain, gazed forth.

It was a lovely day. The ceaseless stir and bustle of the great city was abroad in every street and avenue. Half smiling, he stepped before a mirror to arrange his dress, muttering to himself,

"I may as well make a few calls, this morning; the bark Helen — I like that name! — sails at three this afternoon."

Let 's glance at him a moment, as he stands there, *ma belle* reader, for we like to gratify the girlish curiosity lurking in your brown eyes. Well, what strikes us most is the true manliness and unstudied dignity which speaks in every movement and gesture. The head is remarkably well placed upon the shoulders; and 't is a remarkably fine head, too. A cloud of clustering brown locks are swept proudly back from a broad, expansive brow, where thought and intellect are stamped in unmistakable characters.

There 's an expression of strong will, determination, — it may be pride, — in the dilated nostril, slightly compressed lip, and just perceptible prominence of the chin. And in the eye, the deep, blue, unfathomable eye, that looks out from the o'er-arching brows, there burns the fire of youth and ambition; — and just now a milder light glows in its mysterious depths; and look! — it has spread over all his features, making them glow so genially! He was *handsome* before, — he is *beautiful* now. Whence

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came it? 'T is fading, as we gaze. Ay, it must be that, with all his intellect and hauteur, there 's a warm heart beating somewhere, and 't was *that* looking out from his eyes. He is adjusting his cravat, a dark-blue satin one, over his richly-plaited linen. An amber-colored vest, pearl-gray pants, and deep-green coat, finished a costume which, in its completeness, partook of a charmingly graceful negligée.

"Let 's see," he soliloquized, as he drew on his gloves; "on the Misses Colman, Jane Revere, Uncle Weber, of course, — and Helen — shall I call on Helen Vane?" He turned to the mirror again, probably to see if his hat was properly poised; — and see! — there 's that glorious light on his face again! "Yes, for why should not I? and — why should I? Fame 's my guiding-star, now, not woman's eyes. Pshaw! what can change my purpose, or cause me to falter in my resolve?"

And, proudly tossing his fine head, he left his room, and was soon walking briskly down Broadway, in direction of the Battery.

CHAPTER II.

'T WAS a sumptuous drawing-room into which Rollinsford was ushered at two, P. M., of the same day, his other calls despatched, and but an hour intervening to his time of sailing. He did not notice the elegant fauteuil placed for his convenience by the officious waiter, but roamed about the apartment, gazing abstractedly at the pictures that adorned the walls, or turning over the gilt volumes that lay on the marble tables. While he was thus occupied, a young lady entered. She wore a dark-green velvet dress, fastened to the throat by richly-enamelled gold buttons, and relieved by a small wrought collar. Her dark, abundant hair was brushed away from the gently-expanding temples, and confined in glossy bands at the back of the Grecian-formed head by a golden comb. The large, liquid, hazel eyes beamed with life and animation, and the contour of her figure, as revealed in the broad mirrors, was faultless. Ah! proudly beautiful was Helen Vane! With airy step she glided across the apartment, and stood before Rollinsford ere he was fully aware of her presence. A flush irradiated the marble paleness of her complexion as his gaze fell upon her, but soon vanished, as, with a tone of easy welcome, she bade him be seated, heard with pretty surprise

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of his intended journey, and regretted his determination to leave before the grand masquerade ball at the Astor, the ensuing week. "I'm tired of balls, and theatres, and operas!" he said, half petulantly.

"So am I," she returned; "yet I try to enjoy them; one must have something to employ their time."

"Let it be something worthy the employment of rational beings, then," said he.

"You are becoming a practical moralist, I see. So you fly the gayeties of New York, and sink yourself in a Californian gold mine!" she remarked, with a slight sarcasm in her tone, which evidently annoyed him.

"You do not think I go to California merely to dig gold, do you, Helen?"

"No," she answered; "but that's what many go for, or to speculate, or to meet wild adventure; but it does not coincide with the idea I had formed of your tastes, to suppose you would go for any of these. For what *do* you go, Clifton?" and she raised her eyes a moment to his.

"Because I am tired of this dull, monotonous life, and long for something to help me shake off this lethargy, and rouse my faculties into action."

"And you think California will effect this desired change?" she asked, thoughtfully.

"Yes, I trust so."

"And I fear you 'll be disappointed."

"Why?" he asked, quickly, bending his eye full upon her face.

"O, I don't know," she answered; "perhaps you won't be; but it seems so strange that you, always reared 'mid luxury and refinement, should forego their pleasures for a wild, rough country;— and, don't you see, I'm selfish? 'T will be a great loss to the fashionable world when Clifton Rollinsford's star is withdrawn."

"If to follow in the ranks of fashion is all the reason for which you would retain me, I've a double inducement to be gone," he said, half bitterly.

"'T is not," returned she, quickly; "there are many, you well know."

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"No, — how should I know people's hearts?"

"I'm inclined to think you don't know your own!" she added, laughing while she spoke.

"I'd give it for a knowledge of yours," returned he, seriously, and looking steadily in her eye. She blushed, but answered, gayly, —

"Mine? I could tell it you in a moment. Where there 's little to learn, 't is soon learnt. As the bee hovers on the surface of the flower, extracting only sweetness from its petals, so I skim the surface of society, enjoy the present moment, throw care and thought to the winds, and leave all weighty matters to be digested by such as have a relish for them."

"A mere puppet of fashion!" said he, half contemptuously; "and do you think, Helen Vane, to make me believe you such a machine, such an automaton, as you 've described?"

"I'm not accustomed to have my word questioned," she remarked, proudly.

"Then don't attempt to cajole me with *such* words!"

"Cajole you with such words, Mr. Rollinsford? I don't understand your meaning," she said, rising with an offended air.

"Don't you? Well, I 've not got time to explain, as I hear the bells striking three. 'T is the hour of sail." Helen grew deadly pale. He regarded her some time in silence, and then said: "We 'll not part in anger, Helen."

"O, no," she returned, still with face averted, and leading the way to the hall door; "when will you return?"

"I cannot tell; perhaps in one or two years."

"Well, I wish you success," said she, now glancing in his face a moment, as she opened the door; "good-by, Mr. Rollinsford."

Thus saying, she saw him down the marble steps, and then, hurrying to her own apartment, threw open a window, commanding a fine view of the broad bay, studded with sails, and seated herself in the recess, with eyes fixed on the long line of vessels lying at the wharf, intent on discovering upon which Rollinsford embarked. For a few moments he vanished from sight, and then she saw him standing on deck of a gallant bark. A steamer was alongside towing it into the current. She could distinguish the voices of the sailors, as they sang in jovial

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notes their "welcome to the ocean." Now the vessel swayed to the breeze, and she read the name "Helen" on her stern. She smiled, unconsciously, as the thought that possibly that name had influenced Rollinsford's choice crossed her mind, and then she blushed and chid herself for the presumption. The sun went down, and she watched the lessening sails till they grew to mere specks on the verge of the watery horizon. And now tears fell fast from those lovely eyes. Ah, Rollinsford! could you have known, as your noble bark lost sight of land and stood out to sea, that Helen Vane was watching, with straining gaze, the receding masts, and shedding such bitter tears for you,— *all* for you, Clifton!— how different would have been your thoughts of her! "She 's proud," you say, "and so are you. She shall not have your heart to triumph over, your love to make the sport of an idle tale." She *has* got them already. "But she does n't know it." No; and therein you glory in what should be your shame.

CHAPTER III.

"GOOD-MORNING, Jane," said Esther Colman, as she entered the elegant boudoir of her friend, Miss Jane Revere, a balmy October morn. "I hope you are recovering from that naughty headache that afflicted you at the opera, Wednesday eve."

"Slowly. I think I may be able to attend the Astor to-morrow night," responded Miss Revere, in a languid tone, half rising from the rich sofa on which she had been reclining.

"O, yes! Forrest's benefit, —'t will be a rare entertainment, no doubt. By the way, Jane, I half envy you your late conquest, Robert Earl. He is a splendid gentleman. I saw him pass in at Genin's, this morn, as I came up Broadway. He 'll atone for the loss of Rollinsford, — will he not?"

"What do you mean, Esther?" asked Miss Revere, suddenly starting up, and looking fixedly in her companion's face.

"Why, no offence, Jane! What makes you look so?"

"Loss of Clif — of Mr. Rollinsford!" she uttered, with pale lips.

"O," said Esther, now comprehending her friend's emotion, "no harm has befallen him. I only referred to the gentleman's seeming

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vacillation between the peerless Jane Revere and Miss Helen Vane. Small compliment to his taste!"

"Was that all?" asked Jane, evidently somewhat relieved. "But have you heard any account of him, of late? You visit at the Webers."

"I don't, 't is so dull; a rich old bach, immured in a gorgeous prison, with a widowed sister, looking melancholy as the grave, for a jailer. Sister Abby, who has a taste for the solemn, frequently calls. She told me, yesterday, Esq. Weber received several letters from his nephew by the last steamship, also numerous California journals of late dates. It seems the young adventurer has been successful beyond his own expectations; has already doubled the large fortune he carried there, and has also won a high reputation for all noble qualities among that people, and is now chief magistrate of the city, and comptroller of a large custom-house."

Jane was listening with rapt attention. "Well, what further?" she asked, as Esther paused. "Does his uncle expect him home?"

"He thinks he may come, another season, if he can obtain discharge from his official duties," said Esther, resuming her little narrative. "Perhaps he 'll be here for the winter gayeties. What a lion for the fashionable world! Clifton Rollinsford, the Californian millionaire!—yes, and the talented, the noble, the gifted Clifton Rollinsford,—for the journals of that country vie with each other in bestowing all glowing epithets and lofty praise upon his name."

"Is it so?" asked Jane; "then he has become very famous?"

"So 't would seem. But would n't you like to read his praises? I 'll procure you the papers from Esq. Weber's."

"No, no; never mind," returned Jane.

"'T is the strangest fancy," remarked Esther, after a considerable pause, during which her friend seemed in deep thought, "that Helen Vane has taken to absent herself from the city, just as the gay winter season is commencing, and go to visit an old maid aunt, who resides in a country town away up on the Hudson. Her father is quite inconsolable; but she will not be persuaded to abandon her notion. He idolizes her since her mother died, and his great mansion will seem very gloomy without her presence to enliven it; but then he has always indulged her

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in every wish, — so he 'll have to yield now, probably. I 've always heard her called wilful and haughty."

"I wonder if she corresponds with Mr. Rollinsford?" asked Jane.

"No; report says he called on her just before his leave, and was treated so coldly that he parted with her in scorn."

Something like satisfaction passed over Jane's features, as she asked, "Has Miss Vane any favored suitor, at present?"

Esther looked at her companion attentively for several moments, and then said, "I am, as you know, very little acquainted with Miss Vane, or her company of admirers."

"Esther," said Jane, rising, and turning her large, black eyes full upon her friend, "you *do* know who is Helen Vane's most assiduous follower at present. You should be free in your confidence. Tell me." But Esther blushed and hesitated.

"Some other time, Jane," said she, rising to go. Jane sprang forward, and threw her arms round Esther's waist to detain her.

"You shall not go till you tell me!" she exclaimed, in a determined tone.

"Well, then, if you *will* know, Robert Earl, 't is said."

"Ha!" laughed Jane, her whole appearance changing, "as I expected, from some casual words I 've heard him drop, of late."

"You do not mind it, Jane!" said Esther. "Mr. Earl is a fine gentleman, but what is he compared with Clifton Rollinsford?"

"Ay, what, indeed?" responded Jane. "Yes, Helen Vane may have Robert Earl — "

"But she can't have Clifton Rollinsford!" interrupted Esther; "that 's it, Jane. Bless me, what a call I 've made! Now I must be gone; get over your indisposition, and be one of the brightest among the bright at the Astor-place, to-morrow eve."

Thus saying, she took her leave. Jane fell back upon the sofa. "Then 't is so, is it?" she soliloquized. "Esther is a dear, harmless, unsuspecting thing. Helen Vane has crossed my path again. Well, I 'll make her last essay to foil her first. She may have Robert Earl; willingly, gladly, will I relinquish him. But Clifton Rollinsford, — that could not be so easily done. And he is winning fame and honor in that far western land! How I joyed to hear of his success! He 'll be

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among us, some day not far distant. Let me see. How shall I act? Helen Vane is going to be absent from the city several months. Glad, glad am I! Though he might have parted from her angrily, best their meeting again be avoided; for Helen Vane is, at least, not a harmless rival, even for Jane Revere."

Here her soliloquy was abruptly terminated by the entrance of her mother.

"Jane, my daughter," she began, "'t is very imprudent for you to weary yourself with such long conversation, when your nerves are so delicate, and you have taken no refreshment this morning."

"I've been hearing good news, mother," answered the daughter; and here she related all that had just passed between herself and Esther Colman. Mrs. Revere listened eagerly.

"Have a care, and Rollinsford is yours, my love," she said, as Jane finished her recital.

"Do you think so, mother?" and the languid, drooping, but still very beautiful Jane Revere, sprang to her feet, and, looping back a heavy curtain, surveyed herself in the glistening mirror. The sudden exhilaration of a fresh-springing hope had spread a brilliant glow over her features.

"Well," said her mother, as she gazed with admiration on her daughter's loveliness, "a dazzling rival for pale Helen Vane, truly! Robert Earl to carry off such a prize as this!"

"O, I never loved Earl," said Jane, quickly.

"Of course not, my dear," returned the proudly-conceited mother; "how could you, the belle and beauty of New York, love so plain and common a man as Robert Earl? He 'll do for Helen Vane; but Clifton Rollinsford"—Jane blushed and smiled to hear the name—"is a prize worth striving hard to win."

"Do you think 't will be so very difficult for me to win him, then?" asked Jane, anxiously.

"For you?—No, my love; a king might be proud to bow to you!" and kissing her daughter's brow, the vain mother left the apartment, and Jane, her head whirling with new projects and glittering visions, commenced her morning toilet.

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CHAPTER IV.

How the bleak January wind howled around that large, Gothic-built mansion, standing on a high palisade, o'erlooking the ice-bound surface of the Hudson! 'T would be a beautifully romantic spot in "leafy June," but now all that might tend to heighten its attractions in the bright summer time only served to throw a wilder loneliness and more desolate gloom over the scene. The winter winds screaming through the tall, leafless boughs of the surrounding groves, or howling round the wild heights, driving the snow in immense clouds through the air, or sweeping over the frozen river away to the deep woods beyond, rending, tearing, splintering the proud forest trees, in its angry violence. 'T was a stormy scene, and an unusually rough night when we gazed upon it.

Within the mansion were all the comforts and appurtenances of wealth. Before a brisk coal fire was drawn a soft couch, and on it reclined a pale, yet very beautiful, young lady. She was wrapped in a rose-colored morning gown, and her heavy, dark locks, gathered away from her expansive brow, were fastened in shining braids at the back of her exquisitely-formed head. Her large, gazelle-like eyes wandered dreamily over the elegant apartment, toward the recess of a large window, in which sat a prim, demure-looking lady, apparently about forty years of age. She was dressed plainly, but with scrupulous neatness, and there was something of an air of precision in the exact tie of her pale-blue cravat, and the white satin rosettes, placed at equal distances on the sides of her white lace cap. She was bending over a stand on which burned two brilliant camphene lights, intent upon the mysteries of a German worsted pattern, representing a fiery-colored dog, stretched at full length upon a blue and orange grass-plat, that spread before a frightful black mansion. So deeply was she engrossed with her work, that the young lady spoke several times ere her voice was regarded.

"Aunt Sarah, do you think John will return to-night? — 'tis so wild and stormy!"

"O, yes, love!" said the lady, at length, laying down her work, and advancing to the couch. "John has breasted too many hard storms to mind this. He 'll be here soon, and I trust bring a full packet of news from the city. I begin to fancy you grow weary of this wild

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mountain region, and pine for some of the pleasures and excitements to which you 've been so long accustomed."

"No, no, dear aunt; I assure you I enjoy these winds and storms far better than I would a brilliant opera or theatrical play. They are new to me, — a change from art to nature. 'T is this slight indisposition, for a few days, that has rendered me a trifle dispirited; but, hark! I heard the hall-door. John has come." Directly came a knock, and a large package was handed in.

"As I told you, Helen," said the elder lady; "here, I expect, you have the affairs of New York in detail."

Smilingly Helen Vane received the packet, and, with eager fingers, proceeded to lay open its contents. First came a long letter from her father, full of tender solicitude and anxious inquiries to know "when she would have completed her visit, and be ready to come and cheer his mansion again. 'T was very dull and gloomy without her, and she could not conceive how gay New York was. And, by the way (this in post-scriptum), her old friend and admirer, Clifton Rollinsford, had just arrived from California, rolling in gold, and garbed in honors, too, as she might see by sundry notices and puffs in the journals of the day. He had called to see her, and regretted her absence." A bright flush came over Helen's face, as she lay poring over this paragraph. Her aunt, after reading a brief letter from her brother to herself, inviting her to accompany Helen on her return to the city, and spend several months at his residence, had fallen to turning over the bundle of newspapers, that made a large portion of the package.

"Why, Helen!" she suddenly exclaimed, "your old lover, Clifton Rollinsford, is in New York. Here 's an account of his arrival at the Astor. 'A sumptuous dinner was served, and appropriate toasts, and sentiments of respect and welcome, proffered to one who so richly deserves our gratitude and esteem for the many valuable services he has rendered toward the advancement of our commercial and financial interests in the young and rapidly-rising State of California. Appended are extracts from the best journals of that country, lauding his generosity, nobleness of soul, and far-seeing judgment, in the high and responsible offices he has been called to fill.'"

"Let me read them!" said Helen, who had devoured every word of

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the above, as it fell from her aunt's lips. "Then he has been successful," she said to herself. "The change from civilized to wild life *did* waken his faculties, and incite him to vigorous action. But, in this newly-acquired fame and honor, was it not likely he had forgotten old associations?" A sigh escaped her. "But, then, if he had forgotten all his old friends, why return to his native land? O, perhaps to wear his honors here a while, and dazzle in the eyes of former companions! Pshaw! with all these laurels bending o'er him, he never thinks of you, Helen! Why call on her, then, and regret her absence? O, mere politeness!" She began to wish she was at home; she had half a mind to write to her father to come in a week, and she'd be ready to leave the Highlands; here she had been three months. Aunt Sarah must be tired of her; she wondered she had not thought of this before. Her cough had left her. She was n't ill at all, — mere fancy! And her dear father was so lonely without her! 't was ungrateful, unkind in her to remain longer away; and she turned over the papers again. Her eye caught this paragraph: — "Hon. Mr. Rollinsford will remain but a few weeks in the city. He occupies apartments at the Astor." O! she would go to-morrow, if his visit was so short! She might fail of seeing him, if she delayed another day; but — no, she could n't, — she *would n't* go, either. 'T would seem like throwing herself in his way. Perhaps her father had told him she was going to pass the spring in the Highlands, and, if she now returned to the city, he might think she came for the purpose of meeting him; perhaps that she was willing to treat with greater favor Hon. Mr. Rollinsford, whose name was on every lip, than simple Clifton Rollinsford, who had sailed away from those shores, two years before, a private, unnoticed individual. No! she would not compromise herself in his eyes. Better far not see him. Thus resolving, she turned to the papers again. Another and widely different paragraph, which instantly paled her cheek, and drew the blood back frozen to her heart, met her eye:

"'T is rumored our gifted and thrice-welcomed Rollinsford is to bear away a queenly bride, in person of the much-admired J——e R——e, to deck his western home. Success to him, say we! None but the brave deserve the fair!"

The sheet fell from Helen's hand. A low groan escaped her, and her

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aunt, who, seeing her apparently so pleasantly occupied a few moments before, had resumed her work, flew to her side. She lay before her, white and cold as death. Alarmed beyond description at this sudden and frightful change, she rang the bell frantically, and several servants hurried into the apartment. She despatched them for restoratives; and, after a while, Helen evinced signs of returning consciousness. As soon as she could speak, she bade her aunt gather up the contents of the packet, and put them aside; — saying she thought reading too steadily, in her weak state, had caused her fainting-fit. This seemed plausible; and, suspecting no other cause, Miss Vane did as requested.

For several days Helen remained low, but rallied, at length, and in a few weeks was sufficiently recovered to reply to her father's letter, in which she concluded to say that she would "obey his wishes in regard to the time of returning home;" but she secretly hoped Rollinsford would have left ere her return, as, under existing circumstances, she did not wish to see him.

CHAPTER V.

Hie we to the city. A beautiful eve, the last of February. The superb mansion of Col. Revere one blaze of light. Fairy feet, to exhilarating music, whirl through the mazes of the voluptuous waltz. 'T is the most splendid ball of the season, given in honor of Clifton Rollinsford. He is there; and that lovely being leaning fondly on his arm, with face upturned to his, and wreathed in smiles, is Jane Revere. She thinks the victory almost won. He is speaking in low tones, as they tread the spacious hall.

"What a blaze of brilliancy where'er I turn my eye! Indeed, I feel quite a zest for fashionable pleasure, after being so long engaged in more weighty and arduous duties. 'T is an agreeable relaxation. I shall hardly tear myself away from these glittering scenes so soon as I had intended."

"Why will you not be persuaded to spend the summer in New York?" asked Jane, entreatingly. "Surely you might forego the charms of Californian lands for that brief time, — unless, as I half suspect, some fair señorita has enchained your heart to those shores."

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"Your suspicions are groundless, I assure you, Miss Revere. If there are any chains round my poor heart, they were not forged 'neath southern skies."

She blushed at what she fancied might be a personal allusion, and for some moments they walked in silence.

"I do not notice Miss Helen Vane among your assemblage of youth and beauty, to-night," he remarked, at length. "Ah! by the way, I called at her father's residence, the other day, and he informed me she was spending the winter on the Hudson. Rather a singular taste, to fly the city at the gayest season, 't would seem."

Jane made no reply; and a gentleman now approaching, claimed her hand for the next cotillon. Thus left to himself, Rollinsford glanced about for another companion, as, being already wearied with the dance, he did not care to join it again. He presently encountered the pretty, smiling face of Esther Colman, and advanced to meet her, remarking, as he did so, an expressive glance exchanged between her and Miss Revere, who at that moment passed near them in the waltz. Its import he could not divine; but it immediately passed from his mind, as Esther extended her hand in welcome, and soon engaged him in pleasant conversation.

"You find some changes have occurred during your absence," she remarked.

"Yes," he replied; "but, unfortunately, I have been so much occupied with other affairs, since my return, that no opportunities have presented of learning anything of the histories of my female friends. Will you not condescend to impart to me some information concerning their fates?"

"With pleasure," she answered, "as far as I am able; and with what particular fair shall I commence?"

"Well, let it be Helen Vane, as she is absent, and I may not have the pleasure of meeting her. All these present I can see, and thus judge something of their hopes and prospects."

A cloud darkened Esther's face, at these words. "I'm sorry to say it, Mr. Rollinsford, but you might have chosen one I would have been more willing to speak of."

"How so? — You excite my apprehension!" said he, quickly.

"Needlessly," she said. "Miss Vane is well, and, as you probably

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already know, at present in the Highlands; though soon to return, I was informed by a friend of hers."

"Indeed! — Then I may, after all, have the pleasure of seeing her," he remarked, with a grateful expression.

"Undoubtedly, as she returns for the express purpose of meeting Mr. Rollinsford; so says her friend."

"I'm highly flattered by such condescension. Has she any favored suitor, at present?"

"No. She was affianced to Robert Earl for several months; but has, of late, discarded him, having another alliance in her eye. But you 'll make me a gossip and news-vendor, if I run on in this way," she added, seeing his eyes were fixed upon her face, with a searching expression.

"No," said he; "but I can hardly understand your words, — they seem to carry a hidden meaning. Be more explicit."

"Well, then, Helen intends to marry you."

"She does!"

"Yes. Though she declares she spurned you from her as plain Clifton Rollinsford, and laughed at your protestations of love, now that you are honorable, famous, and covered with gold, she cannot find it in her heart to refuse you for a husband; so she comes to win you for her own." A violent and angry exclamation burst from Rollinsford's lips; and Esther, looking up now, for the first time since she had been in conversation with him, was frightened by his changed appearance, and the mingled expression of intense suffering and fierce anger stamped upon his features. She fled from his sight; and he, half maddened by conflicting emotions, rushed into the hall, seized his hat, and left the mansion.

A few moments after, Jane Revere entered a small apartment in the upper story, where sat Esther Colman, crouched upon the floor, weeping bitterly.

"O, Jane! Jane!" she exclaimed, "I've ruined myself, and him, and you, forever!"

"Hush!" said the latter. "Have you not told him all I bade you, then?"

"Yes, — yes!"

"And does n't he believe it?"

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"I fear so."

"You fear so!—Esther, are you a fool?"

"O, could I only recall those base lies!"

"Recall them!"—and here the proud girl evinced terrible rage,—"I believe you intend to ruin me, Esther Colman!"

"No, no! But could you have seen him,—such agony in his looks!"

"Ha! do you say so? The more need the words should be uttered, then. But come, dry your eyes; we shall be missed."

"You don't suppose I'm going to mingle with the company again, to-night? I should feel a very viper of vileness!"

Jane smiled, scornfully; and then, advancing with a determined air, said, "Miss Esther Colman, you *are* going below to mingle with the company again, and that in a very few moments. So, rise; smooth your dress, and I'll bring some lavender-water to bathe your face." The stronger swayed the weaker. Esther passively obeyed.

None could have read, in the mirthful lips and beaming eye of the one, or the retiring, placid demeanor of the other, the strange scene just enacted in the little attic of that proud mansion, as they entered again the crowded halls, and joined in the dance and song.

Meantime Rollinsford, his brain whirling with excitement, dashed into the street, and hurried on, he scarce knew whither, till he found himself before Esquire Vane's mansion. A sudden impulse led him to ascend the steps and ring the bell. 'T was an unusual hour; but the call was answered, after some delay. "Was Esquire Vane at home?"—"He was not, at present; had gone on a trip up the Hudson, to bring his daughter home." Rollinsford turned away. What was this but confirmation of what he had just heard? So she was really coming to make good her words, and carry his heart by storm. "Where shall I direct my steps now?" he said, standing indeterminate some moments on the pavement. "I'll return to Col. Revere's. 'T is not late, and my brief absence will hardly have been noticed yet. How beautiful was Jane, to-night! There was a time I thought she loved me; but my truant fancy wandered to a worthless one. O, to think Helen Vane such a heartless woman! Now I recollect her strange manner the last time I saw her; and how I attempted to solve its mystery by thinking, perhaps, she loved me, after all, and assumed these humors to disguise it. Fool

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that I was! But here I am at the Reveres'." Thus saying, he smoothed his brow, crushed down his bleeding feelings, wreathed his lip with smiles, and mingled again with the gay assemblage.

Pride's heritage! is it to be coveted or abjured?

CHAPTER VI.

"JUST three little weeks, father,—'t will be but a brief time," pleaded Helen, the evening after her kind parent had arrived to bear her to her home in the city on the morrow.

"But, Helen, your freaks are unaccountable. One moment you place yourself at my disposal, and the next coolly tell me you must have your own way."

"No, father,—not that," she said; "but aunt wants you to stay just two or three weeks, as she cannot now visit you; and, besides, I had forgotten to tell you I've been quite ill of a cough, and fear a journey, this bleak weather, would prove but a sorry antidote."

This last argument was effectual. The fond and careful parent consented to remain any length of time, if his sweet daughter's health was to be endangered by the trip; and here he made many inquiries concerning her illness. Thus Helen carried her point; and the grass in the parks was springing green and beautiful, the trees budding on the Battery, and the fountains playing merrily in the April sun, when she again saw her city-home.

Where was Rollinsford?—married? gone? She hardly dared think. But not long was she kept in doubt.

A few mornings after her arrival, she was in the drawing-room, turning over the papers in search of his name, when her father entered, saying, "I've brought a friend to see you, Helen."

She turned, and saw Rollinsford. The appearance of a spectre could scarcely have frightened her more; and the strange expression of his countenance, together with the constrained, unnatural manner in which he addressed her, served to increase, rather than diminish, her confusion. "You have been some time absent from the city?" he remarked, after the first salutations were over.

"Yes," she returned.

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"Enjoying a winter rustication on the Hudson," added the father, noticing his daughter's embarrassment, and wishing to relieve it.

"So it seems. Did you find it pleasant, Miss Vane?" he asked.

"Quite so." Miss Sarah Vane now entered; and, after a half-hour's desultory conversation, in which Helen made some show of joining, he rose to take leave.

"May we not hope to see you again ere you sail?" asked Esquire Vane.

"'T is doubtful," returned Rollinsford. "I shall be much occupied."

"Be assured of our kindest wishes and desires for your prosperity and success," said the old gentleman; to which sentiment Miss Sarah Vane cordially responded. Helen bowed assent, and Rollinsford withdrew.

With hurried steps he entered his apartments at the Astor, closed the door from intruders, and commenced pacing to and fro, upon the soft carpet, in a wildly excited manner.

"What a change!" he exclaimed. "What has wrought it? Has remorse already commenced its work? Has the blow she intended to inflict upon another recoiled upon herself? Or," he said, with a quick turn of thought, "is she wrongfully accused? What if these reports are slanderous falsehoods? But, then, what could induce Esther Colman — gentle, truthful girl that she is — to repeat such stories, unless she believed them well-founded? Ah! 't is my weak heart would plead for the culprit. Helen Vane, I did not know how well I loved you before; but, by that love, I renounce you, and trust to pride to bear me through. *That* has never yet failed me. I was determined to see her once more, and satisfy myself of her guilt; but I find it is so hard to condemn her: for, though her manner was strange beyond anything I ever marked before, yet 't was not like that of a haughty, heartless woman, who had resolved to conquer a strong man, and hold him in her toils. But, then, perhaps she trembled at thought of her own baseness, when the designed victim stood before her eyes. O, Helen! But, pshaw! how I 'm raving! I 'm to dine at Col. Revere's. Jane grows more lovely every day. Sometimes I fancy she 's beginning to love me. She delights in my company, at least, and the family pay me most flattering attentions. Well, well! I thought distinction, and fame, and honor, would satisfy my soul; but they have failed. Still there 's an inner hunger unap-

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peased. I seem to have feasted my head, and starved my heart. How oft I've pictured a fair image, there in my western home, waiting my evening return from toil, to cheer me with pleasant smiles, or lighten my cares by gentle words; and with thoughts like these, and strange, bright hopes dancing through my brain, I sped on again to these shores, to find them all blasted, — and *worse* than that! Now, can I frame a new one from the shattered wreck? Alas! I've no heart for the attempt. But come, pride, and bear me through! I shall need your strongest support. — A pretty-looking fellow for a fair lady's presence, truly!" he said, glancing at his sullen, troubled countenance in the mirror. "Perhaps Jane's smiles will clear my brow."

CHAPTER VII.

We bear you, reader, to a dying pillow. The noiseless step of a single female attendant glided around the downy couch of the youthful sufferer. Yes, youthful and lovely she had once been; but wasting disease had stolen the bloom from her cheek.

Poor Esther Colman! her hour was coming. Restlessly she turned upon her couch, and assiduously did the faithful nurse administer to her wants. Toward evening she sank into what seemed a quiet slumber, and awoke quite refreshed. Her parents came in, and, seeing her so much revived, felt encouraged that she might recover.

"No, mother," she said, in a low, calm tone, to their hopeful words; "I shall not get well. This intermission from distress is afforded me to perform a duty which I must not neglect. Let nurse bring me my writing-desk." It was placed before her. She took the pen in her slender fingers, and traced upon a delicate sheet a few lines, in distinct yet trembling characters. Then, folding it, she wrote the name of Clifton Rollinsford upon the back, and requested a servant might take it to the post. All was done as she desired. Her father and sister were now beside her. Her mother held her wasted hand, weeping bitterly.

"Bend lower, mother dear!" she whispered, at length. "Your daughter has been wicked; but she has repented, and, I trust, found forgiveness. You'll find a note in my escritoire for Helen Vane. Send it to her when I am gone; and tell Jane — Jane Revere — *I've told all!*

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I could not carry such a burden of guilt to my grave. She has avoided me since I've lain here; but tell her there is that she cannot shun,—death, pale death, will come! O, bid her prepare to meet it peacefully! Come nearer,—I'm going! Farewell all! I hope to meet you in the better home above!" She closed her eyes. One slight struggle, and the erring but repentant one had gone to rest, and the sobs and groans of the bereaved alone broke the stillness of that chamber of death.

Come, reader,—this is a chapter of distinct sketches. Through her elegant apartment, lighted by the pale autumnal moon, moved Helen Vane, shadow-like and wan. Ever and anon she paused before the large windows, and gazed over the broad waters of the bay, as they slept calmly 'neath the moonbeams.

'T was late in the evening, when the bell in the hall was rung hastily, and soon followed a knock on her door. She opened it, and a servant handed her a note, saying Mr. Colman's footman had left it. Helen sent for a light, wondering much what a note from the Colmans to her might import, as they were but remotely acquainted.

The lamp was placed upon the table, and, drawing a chair beside it, she sat down, and broke the seal. The following words met her eyes:

"Miss Vane: I'm dying, and cannot depart in peace till I do what yet remains in my feeble power to rectify a wrong I once did you. I seek no extenuation of my crime; but may be allowed to say I was *induced by another person* to utter words to Clifton Rollinsford which must have biassed his mind very strongly against you, and given your character a most unfavorable aspect in his eyes. God forgive me! Had I strength, I'd write the particulars; but 't is not granted me. I've made all known to him, and trust, some day not far distant, you 'll meet, all be explained, and you be happy together. Adieu! Forgive the penitent Esther Colman."

The sheet fell from Helen's unnerved hand. "Jane Revere," she murmured, "may God forgive you! And poor Esther! I trust she 's happy now." Then she read again the contents of the letter, and fixed every word in her mind. Morning found her still clutching the missive

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in her grasp, and gazing with fixed eyes on the rays of the astral lamp, as they flickered dimly through the flowered glass shade.

Again fly with us, reader, far away over the broad blue sea, and onward toward the "regions of the setting sun." Come with us o'er the streets of this strange, wild-looking city. Sitting on the veranda of that proud mansion, 'neath a canopy of o'erhanging vines, is the one we seek. That broad, intellectual brow, from which the rich clustering locks are swept lightly away, is slightly bronzed by exposure to more fervid suns; and there are shadows there, that were not in the days of yore. There is sadness tempered with the fire that glows in those deep eyes, and around the whole person an air of languor and over-tasked energies, — like one who had toiled for something that had eluded the grasp, or failed to satisfy when gained. All was silent around, when a small Indian boy came into his presence, presented him with a packet of letters, and, bowing low, retired. Rollinsford entered his apartment to peruse their contents. He found several from business-agents in New York, which were quickly despatched. Then came one on which he recognized the hand of his aunt Ring, the widowed sister who resided with Esquire Weber. And, ah! 'twas sealed with black. He tore it open. Even as he feared, his uncle was dead; and the aunt urged the necessity of his immediate return, to settle the affairs of the deceased. He sat, with head bowed upon his hands, for some time, overcome by this sad intelligence, and then suddenly recollected there was another missive yet unopened. He glanced at the envelope. 'T was directed in a diminutive female hand; and, without pausing to conjecture from where it might come, he broke the seal. Immediately his eye was riveted to its contents. Again and again he read them over, and a multitude of strange expressions swept across his features, till at length one predominated, — that of reäwakened hope, and fresh incentive to action.

Come, reader, — come back o'er the bounding billows. How proudly the gallant steamer sweeps up the Manhattan waters! Here 's home, once more, — Gotham, in all its ceaseless din and turmoil. Rest we a while from travel now, and ere long from this winding, it may be, dull and prosy tale.

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Clifton Rollinsford traversed again the streets of his native city; though, on account of his recent bereavement, his return was not made the subject of so much noisy and public demonstration as before. Still, the high place he had gained in the confidence and esteem of his fellow-citizens remained undiminished, and the journals spoke in warm commendation of his talents and reputation.

He devoted himself entirely, for several weeks, to the numerous concerns of his deceased relative's large estate. On leaving California, he had, to the regret of all, resigned his several posts of office, not knowing how long a time it might be necessary for him to be absent, or whether circumstances might ever favor his return to those shores.

CHAPTER VIII.

"HAVE you called on any of your former associates, Clifton?" asked Mrs. Ring of her nephew, one morning, as they sat at breakfast, some weeks after his return to the city.

"Not as yet, dear aunt," he returned; "as you know, I've been much engaged. I propose to do so, however, soon as convenient."

"You've heard of Jane Revere's marriage, probably."

"No!" he exclaimed, with surprise. "Whom did she marry?"

"A German count. I cannot recollect his name. The nuptials were solemnized in the same church, and but a few days after Esther Colman's interment. 'T was the subject of much remark that Jane pushed her bridal train almost over her poor friend's hearse. They were formerly very intimate, though during Esther's long illness 't was said Jane neglected to call on her, and appeared indifferent as to her fate."

"That seemed cruel," remarked Rollinsford; "but the bride,—is she residing in town?"

"No; they sailed to the east, soon after their marriage, to be absent two years. Robert Earl went in the same ship."

"Indeed! he was one of Jane's former admirers, I believe."

"As was also Mr. Clifton Rollinsford, report said, or something more than that."

"Ah, I was not aware of any such reports!"

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"So I was inclined to think, though the rumor that Miss Revere was your affianced bride even found a place in some of the public prints."

"Is it possible!" he exclaimed; "they never came under my notice. 'T was a most bold and unwarrantable use of names, which would have received my censure, had I known of their being thus connected and given to the public."

Here they retired to the parlor, and were for some time silent, Rollinsford apparently in deep thought.

"Where 's Helen Vane?" he asked, at length, somewhat abruptly.

"At home, in good health and spirits," answered his aunt. "'T is said the squire will vacate his city residence in a few weeks, and pass the summer with his sister, at her country seat, in the Highlands."

"Has Helen — Miss Vane — any particularly favored admirer, at present?"

"I cannot say. There was a report that Robert Earl abandoned his suit to Jane Revere, for the purpose of proffering one to Miss Helen, and that she refused it, which is the cause of his going abroad."

"Indeed!" said Rollinsford, dreamily; and, after some moments, added, — "Suppose I call on Miss Vane, aunt, — don't you think she would receive me kindly enough, as an old acquaintance?"

"Undoubtedly, as why should she receive you otherwise than kindly?"

Ay, that little question, so innocently asked, went straight to his heart! He felt he had wronged her, without sufficient cause. True, he heard dark things of her, and knew not at the time but they might be true; still, had he, instead of harboring bitter thoughts, kindly made known to her what aspersions were cast upon her fair fame, all might have been explained, and artifice detected and blasted in the bud. But pride forbade. 'T was time now to do her justice. He started up, and approached the window.

"'T is a lovely day!" he said; "suppose we call this morning, aunt. Your presence will insure me a welcome."

"But the streets!" she returned. "No doubt the sun is bright above, but look below."

Clifton felt in no mood to grovel with the lower earth, but did glance downward, at these words.

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"Yes, a trifle muddy," he remarked. "I might go alone, and risk my chance of welcome."

"Small risk for a brave heart," said his aunt, laughingly.

"Well, I think I'll go," he said, drawing on his overcoat.

"And how soon may I look for your return?"

He glanced at his watch. "'T is now eleven; by two, certainly, in season for dinner. Now, good-morning;" and he issued from the magnificent mansion now his home, and proceeded with rapid steps up Wall-street, to Broadway. 'T was a March morning, the sun bright, but, from recent rains, pavements and avenues were drenched with wet and bespattered with mud. But the multitudes were astir, swarming, hurrying, jostling to and fro, and the great city was as lively as it was dirty.

"Where did you get that dress, Helen?" asked Miss Sarah Vane, as her niece entered her apartment, in a dark-green velvet robe, fitting closely her beautiful form, and a small wrought collar fastened by a diamond breast-pin around her marble throat.

"I've had it thrown aside a long time," she said, "and this morning felt an inclination to put it on."

"'T is very becoming!" remarked her aunt.

"Think so?" said Helen, stepping before the mirror. At that moment the bell rang. "What callers, this wet, dreary day, I wonder?" said she. "I'll run down and enter the drawing-room by the back entrance, and be ready to receive them. You can follow at your leisure, aunt;" and away she bounded.

The crimson damask curtains were dropped before the large windows, and the sunbeams, stealing through their heavy folds, threw a reddish, dreamy lustre over the elegant furniture of the apartment. There seemed to be a pause in the hall ere the visitor entered, — a gentleman there, laying aside overcoat, &c., — indeed, no lady could be supposed to be out, such a day. She sat down upon an ottoman in the recess of one of the windows, which gave but an imperfect view of the front entrance. Presently the door swung open, and some one entered. She heard advancing foot-steps, — who was it? She turned around —

"Helen!"

"Clifton!"

Those words told all.

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Now, come away, reader, while we hold asunder the wrought panels of the mahogany doors, to permit your egress. There, let them slide together upon their silver hinges. The occupants of that drawing-room don't want our company, nor would they heed our presence, though we remained. So let us be gone, and find how, at four o'clock of the same day, in the dining-hall of a splendid mansion, there was a dinner in waiting, spoiled, re-cooked, and spoiled again, for one Mr. Clifton Rollinsford; and the good aunt wonderingly opens her eyes, when her truant nephew comes in at six P. M., and asks "if he found a welcome, and stopped to wear it out?"

"He hopes not the latter;" but he is in such a vast hurry.

"Are you going out again?" she asked.

"Yes, to the opera."

"What a night for the opera!"

"Why, Helen thinks it a lovely evening, and so do I."

"O, 't is well enough, if you think so!" she returned, smiling; and away he went.

"Have you taken rooms at Esquire Vane's?" she asked, one morning, several weeks later, as he was preparing to go out.

"No. Why?" he asked.

"O, I merely inquired for information!"

"You think I 'm spending too much time there," he said. "Suppose I bring Helen here; that might obviate the necessity."

"Such an arrangement would be very agreeable to me, if she don't object."

"I don't think she will, aunt; in fact, she has promised to come."

"And what about California?"

"O, that 's an exploded idea!"

"But don't you fear that New York will pall upon your senses?"

"No."

"And, among so many great men and eager aspirants for fame, may not your glory be at length submerged, and you perhaps sink to the level with the crowd?"

"I neither fear nor dread anything of this. I 've tried fame, and it would not satisfy."

"No, foolish boy! You 've roamed the world to feed your pride, and

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chased the bauble reputation to win a name, forgetting with your lofty head there was a heart low beating deep within, that could not tune its chords to the discordant notes of Fame's clarion trump, but which nothing could bring into harmony, save the soft, sweet tones of woman's love."

"Say of Helen's!" he responded. "I know I've been wrong. Pride and desire of applause have too much ruled me; and I forgot, or strove to stifle, my better nature, that was made up of love."

"And Helen will be yours now?"

"Yes."

And so Pride's heritage was lost in Love's!

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THE LAST! THE LAST!

BY A. P. MORRIS.

The last! The last! What varied hopes
Are waiting for that final doom,
While the wild tide of loving strives
In madness with the darkling gloom,
Which shroudeth round the upturned face
Of one we never more may see,
As backward, with a bitter wave,
Still flows the tide of Memory!

We dream how much we might have done
When all the past was ours,
And gentle hands, now still and cold,
Strewed round us buds and flowers!
Our eyes are dim with scalding tears,
At thought of days of yore;
For ne'er a joy can new friends bring
Like those that come no more!

And, as the life-tide ebbs and flows,
How drearily and cold
Sound those few words that must convey
The wealth of love untold
Which welleth up within the heart
When farewell tears are shed,
And angel-voices call the loved
To join the dreamless dead!

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O! never more in life to gaze
Upon that darling brow;
No more to hear the gentle voice,
Or see the sweet smile's glow!
And where, with fond arms linked in ours,
We once were used to roam,
To wander still, while all we loved
Lies buried in the tomb!

But hours of trial bring the soul
A longing to depart,
And thankfully we meet the fate
That stills the throbbing heart!
Enriched with lessons we have learned
In all the thorn-strewn Past,
We find, when Life's last sands are run,
Our best days are — The Last!

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THE MOONLIGHT SAIL AT NAPLES.

FROM THE GERMAN, BY NELL NICKLEBY.

When the twilight commenced, we sailed slowly along the shore The leaves were fluttering in a gentle evening breeze, and a fresh coolness rose from out the softly-murmuring waves. Gradually the voices died along the shore, and one star after another stepped out from the fading glory, and a solemn stillness hovered over the waters, broken only by the monotonous stroke of the oars, or when, here and there, an inhabitant sprang out of the deep. And now the fire was made.

Bright played the light over the billows away; numberless white flies, induced by the warmth and the brilliancy, precipitated themselves into the shining grave, to become in their turn, as it were, a bait for the fishes, down to the tomb. And behold, a practical show began. Through the smoke of the mountain, sparks mounted up, like fire-balls, which vanished high in the air, or descended again in a luminous track. Sometimes, and usually in the darkness, the entire mass of smoke is converted into a blaze. Then, from time to time, the mountain throws out a shower of stones, and this glowing mass forms the shining sparks.

Magnificently the great glory is reflected in the trembling wave, and it is as if the deep opened, and flames mounted up. The glittering smoke grows nearer and nearer, — first on high, and then deeper under. As a silver-hued cloud, it sweeps round the mountain; a gust of wind divides it; and already the fair moon rises upwards in friendly greatness and splendor. Serenely it now ascends higher, and its tremulous silver pours itself down on the gulf, like light on the many folds of a mantle.

As we were now gliding quietly along in the friendly beams, and the slumbering shore lay there, with its woods and hills indistinct in the

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doubtful twilight, — under me the rocking, excitable waves, over me the everlasting stars, and the immeasurable vault of night, — then memory descended to me on the trembling rays, and my spirit gathered you around itself, my distant loved ones! In the east it was still beautifully red, and only the morning-star dimly sparkled, while from the waters arose a light mist.

Then we landed again, with rich treasure; and, as if newly born, I go forth through the dew-covered thickets, and the slumbering cottages. Nearer and nearer arises life, the shades of night vanish, and light reigns again. O, that the dream of *my* life may be like this night, — my awaking like this morning!

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THE APPOINTMENT

BY H. CORNWELL.

He promised he would meet me here,
To-night, beneath the linden-tree.
Be still, poor heart! why shouldst thou fear
That he can e'er be false to thee?

O, moon! that high in heaven dost sail,
Half hid in rosy clouds of May,
Look from behind thy misty veil,—
Beam forth, and guide him on his way!

Ye nightingales! O, sing again
The songs ye sang in that dear hour,
When with your sweetest, wildest strain,
Ye wooed him to my lonely bower!

The wandering airs, they bring to me
The odors of the orange-grove;
Yet I am sad, for only he
Can bring my lone heart peace and love

I tremble as in every bush
The fragrant night-wind lowly grieves;
I wait, yet comes he not; but, hush!
I hear his light step in the leaves!

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'T is he! — his breath is on my cheek!
His truth bids all my doubts depart;
Thrilled with delight, I cannot speak,
But only press him to my heart!

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THE HEIRESS OF SUTHERLAND.

BY MISS M. J. F.

It was at the quiet sunset hour, and the Earl of Sutherland sat alone, in his spacious library, in the embrasure of one of its richly-curtained windows, gazing out upon his broad and beautiful demesne which lay around. He was not a young man; some fifty or sixty summers had passed over him, leaving but few wrinkles upon the broad, lofty brow, and slightly tinging the raven hair with silver. His tall, commanding form well became his high rank; and the expression of his noble features was such as to win love and confidence directly. A quiet smile of contentment now lingered over them, which brightened into one of perfect radiance as a shadow darkened the window, and his only child, a beautiful girl, sprang lightly into the room, with a joyous, bird-like laugh.

"My dear Alice, where have you been roaming, to weary yourself so?" said the earl, tenderly smoothing her dark curls, as she sunk with a sigh of exhaustion at his feet.

"I have been to Beechwood, papa, to ask Herbert's advice about some little plans of mine for next week's fête, and tell him of the unexpected acquisition to our party in the person of Grace Linwood. How I long to see her! Do you think she will arrive to-night? It will be so delightful to have a sister! — I already love her as one. Why do you smile, papa?"

"Only at your warmth, my darling, towards one you have never seen. I would not have you build your ideas of happiness at her coming too high; for you may be disappointed. She has always lived in France, and has not your warm English heart. Her parents dying when she was quite young, she has been brought up entirely under the care of Madam

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Beaufort, whose husband, in connection with myself, was appointed guardian during her minority. Madam Beaufort I never saw; but her husband I knew well, and could not respect. But he is dead now, and we like not to speak ill of those who have passed away. I only trust that Grace may not have been influenced by him; but that she possesses all her father's noble qualities, as I hear she does her mother's beauty."

"O, papa, I am afraid you are growing cynical! What could be more affectionate than Grace's letter?"

"Too affectionate by far, my dear; it lacked sincerity. But there you are shaking your head. Don't be vexed, my little Alice. I am too old to have your simple trust. We will not discuss Grace Linwood's merits any more at present, but leave her to speak for herself. And now tell me some of your plans for your birth-night fête."

"Well, papa, I believe about the same as usual; — the dance on the green by the peasants, and our ball afterwards, in the great hall, which is to be decorated with flowers. Herbert has been composing a song in honor of the grand event we are to celebrate; and who do you think he has brought with him, from London, expressly, as he says, to open the ball with me? But you could never guess, so I shall tell you; — no less a personage than the Right Honorable Lord Percy Clarendon, eldest son of the Earl of Abington."

"Indeed! I am most glad. His father is an old and valued friend. I have met the young man frequently; and he is a noble fellow, worthy to be the heir of his ancient house, and a most fitting partner for Lady Alice Clairville. Herbert was certainly wise in his selection."

"Now, papa, I am sorry you say so; for I much prefer Herbert himself;"— turning aside, to hide her blushes, while she spoke.

The earl looked grave, but said nothing; and Alice continued, half pettishly: "He is so cold and reserved! He did not address a word to me, but merely bowed haughtily when I entered, and again when I departed. And once I saw him turn away, as though in disgust, while I was merrily talking with Herbert about our gayeties for next week."

"More likely in sadness, my daughter. You probably reminded him of a sister, about your own age, who died a year ago. I have heard that he mourned her loss deeply."

"Poor fellow! If that is the case, I shall think kinder of him. But

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look, papa! There is a carriage coming down the avenue;—it must be Grace. Come with me on the lawn to receive her, that she may feel that she is welcome."

The earl followed his daughter's airy footsteps; and, as their young guest alighted from the carriage, welcomed her with almost paternal kindness of manner. None could, indeed, look upon Grace Linwood with indifference. She was of a tall, slight form, with a complexion of most dazzling whiteness. Her features were more classical than Alice's, though they had not that ever-varying expression. There was a look of conscious beauty ever resting upon them, which, to some, took away much of the charm; and her manners, though of the most perfect grace and ease, were yet studied and affected. Yet she was very beautiful, and certainly warm-hearted, whatever were her faults; for she returned Alice's affectionate greeting with one equally as much so.

"Well, Alice, what think you of my fair ward?" said the earl to his daughter, some hours later in the evening, when Grace had retired for the night.

"O, papa! she is even more beautiful and more lovely than I imagined her. Does she not come nearer perfection than any one you ever saw?"

How could he answer Yes, when that bright, animated face, all glowing with enthusiasm, was lifted to his? He did not; but, tenderly encircling the slender waist, drew her towards him. "She is certainly very fair to look upon," he began; but Alice interrupted him,—"And good, too, I am sure. Do not think me foolish, papa, for loving one whom, as yet, I scarcely know! Grace has a great claim upon my sympathy,"—and her voice sank very low,—"she has never felt a mother's nor a father's untiring affection. What should I have been without your guiding love? Let Grace have a thousand faults, we should excuse them all for her being an orphan. And now do not look so coldly upon her any longer, but love her as you do me; not quite so much, perhaps,—for I must have the first place in your heart. You will promise this, will you not? Ah! that is my own dear papa! And now, good-night. Do not write too long." And, with a warm embrace, Lady Alice left the room; while the earl, with a deep sigh, as he turned to his writing, asked himself how long her sweet trustfulness of heart would last.

The days glided swiftly and merrily away at Ashleigh Park; for the

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joyous, happy heart of Lady Alice Clairville shed sunshine upon all around. Left, at an early age, without a mother's judicious care and counsels, the idol of all around her, she had yet grown to womanhood almost, as it seemed, without a fault. Her fond father said it was impossible to spoil her; and so, too, said her aunt, Miss Harcourt, a maiden lady, who had the charge of the household matters; and the staid governess, though she often gravely shook her head at some wild prank, yet ever yielded to all her fancies, and had been heard to declare "that, of all her pupils, there was none who was so entwined around her heart as Lady Alice." Her seventeenth birth-day had arrived, and, as usual, had been celebrated with great magnificence. The poor, for many miles around her father's estate, had occasion to remember that day; nor did the higher classes think of it with less pleasurable anticipations. The ball in the evening was all that unbounded wealth and the most refined taste could devise to render it upon the grandest scale. Even Grace Linwood, accustomed as she had been to all the elegant gayeties of Parisian society, was dazzled by its magnificence. Nor did she herself pass unremarked in the gay throng. Much admiration she attracted from all; and especially was the devotion of one cavalier commented upon, who had hitherto declared himself a most obedient slave to Lady Alice. The gentleman in question was young Herbert Wilton, whom we have before mentioned in our story, and whose father's estate of "Beechwood" adjoined that of the Earl of Sutherland. He and Alice had been brought up from childhood together, and to him the heiress of Ashleigh Park was as a very dear sister; and often, during the evening, he remarked how very pale she was, and wondered why her dark, earnest eyes were so often turned on him. But, when he would have questioned her about it, her exuberant gayety put it all out of his mind. There was one other there who closely watched the Lady Alice; and that was young Lord Clarendon, whose eye followed her every movement, with the deepest interest.

Long after the others had retired to rest, Alice sat at her window, looking out upon the star-lit heavens, with an expression quite new and strange on her lovely features. How her father would have wondered to have seen her,—her joyous "good-night" had sounded so sweetly to

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his ears! Had she learned, so soon, a woman's lesson of hiding down deep in her heart her own bitter emotions?

It was a week after the eventful day which had completed the seventeenth year of the life of Lady Alice, that, as she and Grace sat alone in the drawing-room (the earl having had occasion to go to London, on business), young Herbert Wilton and his friend unceremoniously entered.

"Come, Ally, — Percy and I are for boating, this afternoon; cannot you and Miss Linwood be induced to accompany us?" His words were to Alice, but his look was bent on Grace, who arose with alacrity, saying, "Your coming is quite apropos, Mr. Wilton. Ally and I were just beginning to be weary of moping in-doors, this fine afternoon; and I think I can speak for both, and say we are ready for any out-door exercise." Alice arose, too, with a ready acquiescence; though there was the slightest possible curl of her haughty lip, as she left the room, with Grace, to prepare for their expedition.

The river ran just without the enclosure of the park of the Earl of Sutherland; and to roam along its banks was a favorite walk with Lady Alice, who now, as they went towards the boat, pointed out to young Lord Clarendon many beauties in the surrounding scenery, while, at the same time, she watched Herbert and Grace, who were merrily chatting together in front, with rather an uneasy glance.

"Surely you are not going without James?" she said petulantly to Herbert, after they were seated in the boat, and he was undoing the fastenings. "You know papa would not trust me with you on the river, last summer, without him. It will displease him, if he does not go with us."

"Now, Ally, I am astonished! Am I not a whole year older since that command was given? And you cannot think in that time how much I have learned of the difficult art of sailing a boat of this size and tonnage. Besides, here is Percy, who, should any accident happen, would delight to show his chivalrous spirit to so fair a lady as yourself, at *any* risk. Remember, Percy, to your care I commit Lady Alice!"

"A most high and precious trust," said the young lord, quickly, "and one which, I assure you, none can feel the value of more deeply than myself. I am no sailor, Lady Alice, but I believe I may say a good swimmer; therefore, I beg your ladyship will have no fears what-

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ever." A blush and a cold bow was the only reply on the part of Alice, while Herbert turned to her with a merry smile:

"There! — did I not tell you so? You see how ready he is, like a true knight, to show his devotion to you. And now can I hope, Miss Linwood, that, after the animadversions that have been thrown upon me, you can trust yourself to my guidance?" He bent towards her, in his eagerness, forgetting for the moment what he had in charge. They were out some way in the river, for the wind was blowing quite fresh; and, before Percy's warning could be heeded, the boat had capsized. It was the work of an instant. Alice felt a manly arm clasp her, and words of deep thankfulness fell on her ear as she felt herself borne rapidly towards the shore.

"O, Herbert! — save him!" she exclaimed wildly, as her preserver gently seated her upon the green bank of the river, and she caught sight of young Wilton struggling in the water with the senseless form of Grace Linwood.

Lord Clarendon turned away, without a word. Another moment, and he had reached them; and with his aid Herbert was enabled to reach the shore safely, with his burden.

"O, Alice! Alice! What shall I do?" exclaimed he, as he deposited the insensible Grace upon the green sward. "I fear that I have killed her! Miss Linwood! Grace, — dear Grace, — speak to me! She does not hear me! O God!"

"Herbert," said Alice, — and the calm, gentle tone of her voice caused them both to start, though there was one who noticed it was with a visible effort she spoke, — "do you run to Dame Henry's cottage, — 't is but a few rods, just beyond the trees there, — and tell her what has happened; and ask her to send one of her sons to Ashleigh for the carriage, directly. Nay! do not be so alarmed;" — chafing, while she spoke, the temples of Grace with a wet handkerchief, which Lord Clarendon had silently handed to her. "See, Grace is getting better already; the color is returning to her lips. Do you feel better, Gracey dear?" she said, affectionately bending over her.

"O, Alice!" exclaimed Miss Linwood, slowly unclosing her eyes, "was it not dreadful? Are we safe, now? Are all safe?" and she looked eagerly around, until her eye caught sight of the retreating form

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of Herbert, who, seeing her recover, was hurrying to fulfil the request of Alice. Young Lord Clarendon had delicately turned away, and seemed entirely absorbed in surveying his wet apparel. "O, I am glad that none of us were drowned," continued Grace, "though I came nearer to it than any one, I think! But, pray tell me, Alice, how long have we got to remain in these wet garments? — for this chilliness is anything but pleasant."

"Just so long till you feel able to walk up to Dame Henry's, which is but a short distance from here, where I have already sent Herbert to prepare her for her unexpected visitors. She probably can lend us some clothes to ride home in. The carriage will soon be here; for Herbert was to send for that, too."

Grace arose speedily, saying that she was quite recovered; and, playfully complimenting Alice upon her thoughtfulness, they, with Lord Clarendon, wended their way to Dame Henry's. The poor old lady was almost beside herself, when she saw the plight of her young mistress; but she quickly helped them off with their wet garments, exchanging them for such as her plain wardrobe afforded.

The gentlemen were equipped, in like manner, in some of her son's clothes. The appearance of all parties was somewhat changed; and they passed the time in making merry at each other's expense, until the carriage arrived.

Herbert and Grace seemed quite to have recovered from their fright, and kept up a spirited conversation, on their way home, to the utter forgetfulness of their quiet neighbors opposite, except when the very pale cheek of Lady Alice would call forth the inquiry from one of them, "If she were going to faint;" and then, when the keen, searching glance of Lord Clarendon brought the blood to her very temples, they would laugh at each other for their fears. And so they reached the park, when, greatly to her relief, Alice learned that her father had not yet arrived from London, and was not now expected until the morning.

Great was the excitement when it was known what danger the Lady Alice Clairville had passed through. Her aunt, Miss Harcourt, embraced her a dozen times, and then turned and favored her preserver with almost as many. The good old governess wept and laughed by turns, as she listened to the recital of the accident; while she ever afterwards

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looked upon the young lord with a sort of adoration, as, indeed, did all the servants, who seemed to try to outdo each other in their attentions to him; for Alice, with her aunt, had insisted upon himself and Herbert remaining at Ashleigh for the night.

The earl returned early in the morning, when young Wilton informed him, with the deepest penitence for his carelessness, of the accident which had befallen his daughter; and Alice, as she entered the breakfast-room, was clasped in her father's arms, while, as with much emotion he pressed his lips to her brow, he murmured a heartfelt thanksgiving for her safety. He remarked her pale cheek and languid air with a look of the deepest anxiety, and was about to chide her for rising so early, when the door opened, and Lord Clarendon entered.

"My dear young lord!" he said, extending both hands to the young nobleman, "what do I not owe you?—and how can I ever repay you? Words are inadequate to express the deep feelings of a father's heart to the preserver of his only child. I can only trust that at some time of your life you will give me the opportunity of showing to you how much, how very much, I prize the service you have rendered me. There is no boon that you could ask of me I would not grant,—no, not one!"

"I do not deserve that you should thank me so, my lord," answered Clarendon. "It was the instinct of humanity; and, though I am most happy to have been the means of saving the life of your daughter, I trust I should have been just as ready to have rescued any one else, in like circumstances. Did you see my father in town?" he asked, abruptly, anxious to change the subject; which the earl, with delicate tact, immediately understood, and nothing more was said of the accident that morning.

In the latter part of the afternoon, as Alice, upon the plea of a headache, had shut herself up in her boudoir,—a beautiful little room, which opened into the conservatory,—she was surprised by a visit from her father, who entered, with a most comical expression upon his fine features.

"So it seems, my love," he began, drawing an easy-chair to her couch, "that I am to have the care of my ward but for a short time. Here is young Wilton beseeching me to let him marry her at once,—he having already gained the fair lady's consent. So, what can I do but

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add mine?—though I tell him I fear it will be marrying in haste to repent at leisure. But what young and ardent lover ever heeded such a warning? They are to be married in about a month, and proceed directly to London; for Herbert is anxious to introduce Grace to the gay world, where, if I have not judged her wrongly, she will be completely lost in the whirl of fashion and gayety. But how pale you are, my darling! Are you sure you did not take cold yesterday?" Alice silently shook her head, while the earl exclaimed, warmly, "How can I ever render back the great service I owe Lord Percy? Is he not a noble fellow, Ally?" But his daughter replied, with a touch of irritability that he had never noticed in her before:

"No, papa! He is to me one of the coldest, haughtiest, most conceited persons I ever saw. Nay, do not be vexed with me for saying so. I am grateful to him for saving my life, though I wish it had been anybody else. Do not think I am judging him by what I have seen in his short visit to us; if I did, I should deem him the most perfect of mortals. But I have heard a great deal of him through Miss Seaton, who was governess to his aunt's children, where he lived after his mother's death, and where his tyrannical selfishness caused him to be dreaded by the whole household. And Cousin Foster, who was at Eton with him, tells the same stories of him there, except that he assumed a saint-like dignity of demeanor, as a cloak to his real character." A noise in the conservatory here startled Alice; but, supposing it to be her favorite spaniel, who very often frequented it, much to the damage of sundry pots of flowers, she did not rise to inquire the cause.

"I cannot believe any of those stories, Alice," said the earl, gravely. "I am sure, if ever a noble heart beat in the breast of man, it is in that of Lord Clarendon. I grieve to think that you have so evil an opinion of him, and trust that the future will show how deeply you wrong him by entertaining it. But you look tired and sick, my love. You had better try and get some sleep, while I ride over to Beechwood to congratulate old Mr. Wilton upon his prospect of so accomplished a daughter-in-law." And, affectionately kissing her, the earl left the room.

No sooner had he gone than Alice burst into a flood of tears. No thought of her preserver caused them to flow; they were all shed for

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Herbert Wilton, whom she imagined that she loved. How could she, who had seen so little of the world, be capable of judging of the real state of her feelings towards him? He was, indeed, no more to her than an elder brother; though her romantic disposition tried to think of him as something nearer. How, in after-years, she laughed at her folly!

The preparations for the marriage went speedily forward; and in about a fortnight the happy couple were united, and off on a tour to France, before the commencement of the London season of fashion; while Alice was left alone, every day becoming more sad and nervous, till her father, alarmed at her appearance, determined upon trying a change of scene and air, and proposed a tour on the continent. The idea of visiting Italy soon restored the animation of Alice; and the earl had the satisfaction of again seeing her wonted vivacity, while the preparations for the journey went on.

The day before her departure Alice received a letter, which, by the date of it, she saw had been delayed a long time in reaching her. It was post-marked London, and with the greatest astonishment she saw it was the seal of Lord Clarendon. Hastily opening it, she read the following:

"To Lady Alice Clairville: I trust your ladyship will pardon the liberty I have taken in addressing you. Let the motive plead for the act. Should the subject weary you, — and I dare not hope it will interest, — may I not beg of you to read it to the end, for the sake of one who would, if possible, extenuate himself in your opinion? It is to your generosity and kindness I trust myself, promising to reward your patience by making my story as short as possible. Having accidentally fallen asleep in the conservatory, one afternoon, when I had the pleasure of visiting at Ashleigh Park, I was awakened by hearing my name spoken by yourself. An impulse I could not resist prompted me to remain quiet; and I had the satisfaction of seeing the truth of an old adage exemplified, in regard to listeners; and it is in the hope of hearing you judge me less harshly at some future time, that I am writing now. You are aware that I am an only son, and, from my youth upwards, have been indulged in every whim. My mother — who, in her gentle love for me, was the only one who ever sought to reprove or check my faults —

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died when I was quite young, and left me, a wild and wayward boy, to the care of an aunt, who had never loved me, — who had ever regarded my higher rank over her sons with a most jealous eye. I was proud and high-spirited, and she sought by every means in her power to annoy me. I am not surprised at Miss Seaton's opinion of me. Everything that I did was represented wrongly, until my naturally passionate temper, so chafed on every occasion, became beyond my control, and I was continually at war with some one. How I hate to look back upon those days! What I might have become, Heaven only knows, had not my father, wearied with complaints from my aunt, sent me into the country with a tutor, whom he had procured for me. That man was my savior. All the good there is about me I owe to his gentle influence and example. But the effect of the treatment I received at my aunt's never wore away; it changed me from the frank, trusting boy, into the reserved, sensitive, and (would it were not so!) suspicious man. It was these qualities, united to some domestic sorrows, which afterwards, at Eton, made me much disliked by a certain set there, among whom was your father's cousin, but who is most unworthy the relationship; yet it is for that I will spare him now all harsher judgment, even though it be to vindicate myself. He should not, at least, have called me a hypocrite; it was my very candor to him which made him such a bitter enemy. And now I have done. You may think it strange that I have written this; but you remind me strongly of one who passed away in all her youthful loveliness; and for the sake of that dear one I would that you should not think harshly of me. Can I dare hope that the few lines I have written will lead you to think more kindly of me? If so, then I am happy in having accomplished my object. Forgive me if I have wearied you; and may God in his mercy ever bless and protect you!

CLARENDON."

Alice laid aside the letter with a feeling of deep mortification and pain. She felt she had wronged him, and would have given worlds to have recalled her harsh words. She read it over and over again; every word spoke of the generous heart that had dictated it, and she mentally resolved that the future should atone for the past. He should see that she was not too proud to confess herself far too hasty in her judgment of

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him; and that she could be doubly grateful where she had appeared so far otherwise.

But they did not meet again for two years, — when Alice returned to London, after her tour abroad with her father, her education completed in the most finished manner, and she passed from her bright girlhood into the beautiful and dignified woman. Grace and Herbert hardly knew her, so much had she altered. And how proud her fond father was of her! How he watched every graceful movement of her airy form! She was all in all to him; and well she might be. Seldom had so bright a creature, gifted with such rare beauty, talents and high birth, all combined, appeared upon the gay stage of London life.

She was introduced at court, and received with unusual favor, and became immediately the belle of the season. To catch a smile from the bright lips of Lady Alice Clairville, was esteemed the highest favor, among the many who thronged around her. Not to be at the Earl of Sutherland's parties, was not to be in the fashion.

And how did Alice — this favored child of fortune, as it seemed — bear all this flattery and adulation? At first, with a sort of quiet gratification, but one which was gradually becoming her very existence. The earl, vain of the admiration she attracted, never sought to check her in her thoughtless career; and every evening found her the "observed of all observers" at some gay ball or fashionable concert; — excepting when little Percy, Herbert's only child, who was sadly neglected by his mother, and who had become very much attached to Alice, would beg her to stay with him. Often she yielded to the little fellow's entreaties, and would spend a quiet evening at home with him and her father; and then it was that she saw Lord Clarendon; for he seldom mixed with the gay world, and was very often her father's guest of an evening; for the earl's health did not always permit him to accompany his daughter.

Often, at these times, Alice longed to tell him how much she regretted the past; but his cold, and reserved, yet studiously respectful manner to her, ever repelled her. She felt the distance widening between them every day, and with more sorrow than she dared confess to her own heart, which, unconsciously to herself, acknowledged his superiority over those whom she daily met.

One night, when she had finished dressing for a party, she entered the

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library to bid her father good-night, as was her custom when he did not accompany her. Lord Clarendon was sitting there, with little Percy (who had been spending the day with her) on his knee; who no sooner saw that Alice was going out, than he sprang towards her, catching hold of her dress with both of his tiny hands, beseeching her, in his infantile way, to stay with him.

"Not to-night, Percy,—I cannot stay," answered Alice, stooping while she spoke, and caressing him.

But the child pleaded yet more earnestly; saying he was sick, and wanted "his Ally to stay and make him well." This appeal rather disconcerted Alice, who was still hesitating, when the footman announced "the Countess of Granby's carriage, for her ladyship." She glanced at the still clinging child, whose flushed cheeks and hurried breathing fully warranted his simple words; at her father, who was apparently absorbed in his book; at Lord Clarendon, whose eye was bent upon her with a look of such intense earnestness as to startle her. "He thinks," she mentally exclaimed, "I cannot give up going. He shall see that I am not wholly the vain, trifling thing he deems me." She turned quickly to the footman: "Tell the countess I remain at home this evening." The footman vanished; while the earl threw aside his book, and said, with more than his usual tenderness,

"I am glad to see, my love, that you are not so completely wedded to pleasures abroad as to be unable to spend a quiet evening at home. It shows me the world has not yet succeeded in making you selfish. Let me see if it has made you less entertaining than of old. I should like much to hear some of those fine duets that you and Herbert used to sing, at Ashleigh. Lord Clarendon, here, can supply his place. What say you, little Percy,—shall not Ally give us a song?"

"O, yes!" answered the child, who, in an ecstasy of delight, was clinging to his favorite's neck, since he had understood she was not going to leave him.

"Well!—let me go now, Percy, and change my dress," said Alice, gently striving to unclasp the little hands that were so firmly around her neck. But the child seemed afraid of losing her from his sight a moment, and would not let her go. It was then Lord Clarendon stepped hastily forward, and relieved her from his namesake, promising to show him

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some beautiful pictures; while Alice, as she passed from the room to change her rich dress for one more suitable, thought herself fully repaid, in any sacrifice she had made, by her father's praise, the child's pleasure, and Lord Clarendon's admiring glances.

The evening wore away in conversation and song; and so pleasantly that Alice had not taken any heed of the time, till her father, looking at his watch, told her "it was past midnight."

She arose, and was just bending for his nightly salutation, when the door of the library opened hastily, and little Percy's nurse rushed in, with — "O, my lady! Little Percy is taken very sick, ma'am! We fear it is the croup. He keeps calling constantly for your ladyship."

"The croup!" said Alice, bewildered by this sudden interruption, and to whom all children's diseases were a mystery.

"Yes, your ladyship! We fear he will choke to death, if he cannot get immediate relief."

This was more intelligible; and, asking her if she had called her aunt, but without waiting for her to reply, she flew up the staircase, to the child's room.

And there upon his little bed he lay, tossing wildly about, moaning sadly. Tenderly Alice bent over him, — a glad expression passed over his face a while; very faintly upon her ear fell the words:

"Ally, stay with Percy! Do not leave Percy!"

She answered by lifting the little head, and resting it upon her bosom, with a smile and a kiss, that the child perfectly understood.

"O, aunt! — is there no way we can give him any relief?" she said to Miss Harcourt, who was bustling about the room.

"I fear not, my dear. It is a most fatal disease, when once it has taken hold of a child. But the doctor will soon be here; for Lord Clarendon has himself gone for one, thinking he could accomplish it quicker than a servant. I have sent for Mr. Wilton, too; but where, alas! can I send for his mother, — she who should have your place, Alice? O, I hope you will not let the flatteries of a false world make you as heartless and selfish as they have seemed to make her!"

"I hope not, indeed!" said the voice of her father, by her side. "You are tired, my love; let me take your place." Alice moved to

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obey, but the child clung to her, and uttered a mournful cry; and, with tearful eyes and a pale cheek, she kept her post.

Lord Clarendon shortly arrived, with the doctor, who told them there was no possible hope of his recovery. The words fell like a knell upon the ear of one who had entered the chamber unnoticed, save by the little sufferer himself, who, amidst all his pain, smiled, as he said, faintly, "Papa!"

"O, do not tell me there is no hope!" exclaimed Herbert, in agony, kneeling by the bedside. "Is there not some means yet untried? This is so sudden! It cannot be that my bright boy is to die! Alice, can you give me no hope?—You, to whom he clings, even now, with such trustful love! How can I give him up? He is my all, my only happiness now!"—and the strong man buried his face in his hands, and wept.

"Papa," said the dying child, speaking with greater difficulty every moment, "don't cry! Kiss Percy,—papa's own boy!"

The sorrowing father bent over him, and, as he kissed him, strove to take him from Alice, who was supporting him, with a cheek perfectly blanched, and with a strong effort to control her own feelings; for she had never looked on death before. But the little sufferer clung tenaciously to her to the last. And Alice felt, as though in a dream, the weight grow heavier upon her arm,—saw the bright eyes close,—and heard the childish voice whisper, "Ally, come—come—with little Percy!"—and then a solemn stillness followed, which spoke of death to her awed soul: and then a mother's cry of despair and remorse, as Grace, in her rich dress and sparkling jewels,—just from some scene of mockery and pleasure,—fell in violent hysterics by her side. Then she remembered being clasped in her father's arms, and borne away to her own room, while on her ear fell the words, spoken by some other's lips, "Alas! how sad a change can be brought about in a few hours!"

It was some weeks after the child's death before Alice again joined the gay throng of fashion and pleasure, and then it was with very different feelings. There was less excitement, less gratification, where all before had been perfect enjoyment. Her little favorite had passed away from among them so suddenly, that, for the first time, her thoughts had been awakened to the solemn mysteries of that other world; and often in

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the giddy throng, when jest and laughter echoed around her, or amid the mazy dance, she would hear the childish voice calling upon her to "come." She had sorrowed deeply for the little lost one who had loved her so well; and to Grace and Herbert she had been the kind, sympathizing sister, striving, in her own irresistible way, to soothe and cheer them. Her former penchant for Herbert was like a thing forgotten; or, if thought of, it was with a smile of regret at her own folly, which had imagined her childish jealousy of his regard for her to arise from love. She felt that her life had been one of unmixed happiness; and now, for the first time, was she awakened to a sense of gratitude for it, which brought with it fear lest some blessing which she now possessed should be taken from her. Thus had sorrow, in the Lady Alice, accomplished its first lesson, making her distrustful of earthly gifts. It had yet a higher purpose; and she must drink deeper of the cup, ere she learnt to look above, with trustful hope and love, for that joy and happiness which no amount of earthly blessings could bring.

Days rolled by, and Alice was beginning to weary of the heartless life she led, and to long for the calm, pure air of her childhood's home. She was now more frequently her father's companion at home, and more like the devoted daughter of old, watching every look of those noble features, and almost anticipating his every wish.

"Why do you look at me so earnestly, darling?" said the earl to her, one afternoon, when she was sitting in her favorite seat — a low stool — at his feet, with her arms crossed upon his knee, intently watching him while he read.

"I was thinking, papa, how unhappy I should be without you to love me. What is wealth, rank, fashion, fame, without true affection, that crowning blessing of all our joys? It sheds peace and happiness beneath the lowliest roof; it teaches the rich and powerful to appreciate and feel grateful for that which conduces to some dear one's enjoyment; and I am sure even the most careless and worldly must, in some moments, feel how far above all earthly gifts is a loving heart. I could not live, papa, without your affection to guide and bless me."

"My dear Ally, what has made you such an enthusiast, to-day?" said the earl, smiling rather sadly, as he pressed the little hands that rested so lovingly on his knee. "I would not have you value earthly

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affection so highly; for, though I acknowledge, with you, that, of all our blessings here, it is the noblest and holiest, yet, like all things of earth, it perisheth, my child. We are all too apt to make an idol unto ourselves, and forget that He who gives can take. I would not pain you, Alice; but there have been times, lately, when I have felt I might be summoned suddenly away from you. I have had a strange feeling at my heart, lately. You know my father died of disease of the heart. Nay, do not weep so, my darling!"— for Alice had risen, and was sobbing on his bosom. "You will, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that you have been the best of daughters to me. You have never given me a single moment's pain; but have ever been a joy and blessing, unequalled save by the love of the dear one who bequeathed you to my care."

"O, hush, papa!— do not talk so! Promise me that you will never talk so again! Were you to die, I should die, too; for who would be left to love me?"

"Alice! Alice! how many kind hearts you are wronging now! Well, well, if it grieves you so, I will not say any more about it. But there is one, my daughter, whom I would have you love, even better than me; whose long devotion to you can never wholly be requited."

Alice checked her sobs to listen; but just then the servant threw open the door, and announced "Lord Clarendon;" and, with the sentence unfinished on his lips, the earl arose to welcome his guest, while Alice quickly vanished from the room. And, in a few moments afterwards, when her father sent for her, he was told "she had gone to take a drive in the park."

Alice returned from her drive sad and dispirited, with a foreboding of sorrow weighing down the gayety of her heart. She tried to assume a more cheerful air as she entered the library, where she had left her father sitting with Lord Clarendon. Alas! what a change had come over that room since she had left it! And as she opened the door, she stood, for an instant, rooted to the spot, with the sight that met her eye.

On a couch was stretched her father's form, with kneeling domestics at his feet; while over him was bending her aunt, with Lord Clarendon, and others that she did not know. She had entered so noiselessly that none of them had perceived her, till a wild, despairing cry, that struck a

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chill to every heart, caused them all to start in alarm, as the orphaned girl threw herself, in agony unspeakable, upon her father's senseless form. Could it be that there was no returning embrace? Could, O, could it be that those eyes, which had never looked upon her but with love and fondness, were closed to open no more? That dear voice, that had never spoken save in some tone of endearment or gentle counsels, — was it stilled forever? The hand that hung so listlessly down, — could it never again wander amid her curls, or rest lovingly there, as only a fond father's hand can rest, while he implores a blessing for his child? All this shot across the brain of Lady Alice. She turned wildly to her aunt:

"Tell me, O, tell me that he is not dead! Say that he will speak again, if it be only to bless his child! To think, O God! — to think that he should die, and I not by him! How prophetic were his words! O, aunt! — is he indeed DEAD? You do not answer! You turn away! My lord! — you who are so kind, you whom he loved so well, — have some pity for me, and tell me he is only sleeping! Hush! Hush! Is he not calling me, now? Father! — father! I am here, close beside you! Speak to me, if it be only to say that you forgive me for all my past unkindness and neglect!"

Alas! that cry so oft repeated, and always in vain! Poor Alice! She felt the utter hopelessness of any answer, and with a low wail, that those who heard never forgot, she bowed her head upon the cold breast of him who had sheltered her from infancy; and when, a moment afterwards, Lord Clarendon, who perceived that she had fainted, gently raised her, it took almost all his strength to unclasp her hands, which were around her father's neck. They bore her tenderly to her own room, and for weeks she languished in a brain fever, but which, at last, yielded to her naturally good constitution.

It was some two months after the death of the Earl of Sutherland, and Alice, very pale and thin, was sitting in the library, — now her favorite room, — in company with her aunt and Grace; and, in spite of all their endeavors to the contrary, still retained a sort of apathy of grief, which it was most painful to behold. She was kind and gentle to all, — yielding without the slightest remonstrance to all her aunt's good-natured

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suggestions; but shrank from talking, or anything like liveliness, with a nervous dread that amounted to intense suffering. She never mentioned her father; but she would sit and look at the vacant chair, and then at his portrait, with an expression which must have moved the sternest heart.

"Dear Alice," said Grace, suddenly, after there had been a long pause, "have you not thought it strange that your father should have made so young a man as Lord Clarendon your guardian?"

"No," said Alice, briefly, and with a visible effort.

"For my part, I am sure I should not like him at all for a guardian,—he is so stiff and haughty, ever repelling one from anything like familiarity. I scarcely ever dare to speak to him, and always feel relieved when I am rid of his presence. But, I declare, if here does not come his lordship, up the street! So, I'm off, at once!"

"Stay, Grace!" said Alice, with a touch of her former spirit. "I cannot hear you speak ill of Lord Clarendon. He is one of the noblest and best of men. You need not smile! My father loved him!"—her voice trembled.—"He was by his side when—I should have been; and for all this, and more besides, I should be the most ungrateful of human beings, if I did not—"

"Lord Clarendon, my lady," said a servant, just at that moment, in a low, respectful tone; and Alice half rose from her seat, and her face for an instant brightened with a smile, as she extended her hand to his lordship, while Grace looked on in perfect wonderment at his altered manner.

There was not the slightest touch of either stiffness or hauteur in his greeting to his fair ward. His words were few and simple; but they were spoken with all the affectionate solicitude of a brother, mingled with a certain sort of grave tenderness, which well became the relation in which he stood to Lady Alice, but which Grace, as she remarked, could scarcely forbear smiling at, in so young a man; but he soon claimed her entire admiration by his delightful and varied conversation, by which he sought to divert the mind of Alice, and in which, once or twice, he partially succeeded; till, on a sudden, some word, look or tone, recalled her lost father to her, and she would bury her face in her hands with a deep-drawn sigh, that for a moment checked all conversation. It was after one of these sad pauses, when Grace had gone home,

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and Miss Harcourt had been summoned from the room, that Lord Clarendon, rising, and taking a few hurried steps across the room, as though to relieve the agitation which was visible in his face, suddenly seated himself by her side.

"Lady Alice," he began, in a low, firm voice, which at once drew her attention, "your father, not only in his will, but in his dying moments, prayed me to be the guardian of his child, — to soothe and cheer her sorrow, to watch over her happiness, to fill, in some slight degree, the vast space which his death would cause. I feel deeply the noble confidence which could impose so sacred an office upon me, and am conscious of my own unworthiness; but should I not miserably repay your father's trust, could I see you thus wearing away your life in sorrow, and not make some strong effort to help you to subdue it? I cannot see you suffer thus any longer. Forgive me, if I speak too plainly; but it is wrong, very wrong, to give yourself up to grief in this way. You have said there is no more happiness for you in the world; that you have nothing to live for. O, Lady Alice, have you never thought that we all are sent here for some purpose; that each has a mission to perform; that to every one is given the power of doing good, either upon a large or small scale? — and you, with your rank, wealth and talents, — on how large a sphere could you exert an influence that would never pass away! 'T is true, the approving smile of ONE could never again reward you; and this, I know, is a most painful thought; but there is a higher power above, to please whom should be our first duty, and whose approval should be far above all earthly considerations. And may we not trust that your father's spirit will stoop from its bright home above to hover o'er his child, like some guardian angel, in any good efforts you may make? There is much of sorrow and misery in the world; your own suffering has taught you this, and will yet teach you how to sympathize with those who suffer more. But it is not all clouds and darkness; and we greatly err, if, in the many blessings that are showered upon us, we do not find rich enjoyments." He paused, and Alice said, in a tremulous tone:

"Go on, my lord, if you please. Tell me what I shall do, — how shall I begin? I have long felt the necessity for action, but never so much as now."

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"My plain speech has not offended you, then?" he said, with a gratified look, while the beautiful but rare smile which sometimes lit up his features met the gaze of Alice, as she turned to him quickly, with —

"Nothing you could ever say, my lord, will offend me. I beg of you never to think of that again, for a moment. Let me know whatever you think right, and I shall try to do it."

A flush mounted to the pale brow of the young guardian. He glanced at his ward; her gaze was fixed upon her father's portrait. He understood her words, and, with something like a sigh, he answered, "I am very proud of the trust you repose in me, and shall put it to the test at once, by proposing your accompanying me to Ellsmere, on a short visit to my father. Your aunt will go with you, of course; and you very much need a change of scene and air; it will be the first step towards acquiring a calmer state of mind."

Alice hesitated; she could not bear to leave a place where everything around spoke of her father. The chair he had last sat in, the books he had read, — how could she lose these from her sight? It was a hard struggle, but she felt the necessity of making it, and Lord Clarendon had the happiness of hearing her consent. It was finally decided that from Ellsmere she should proceed to Ashleigh, there to carry out whatever plans her noble guardian should have formed for the good of those over whom, as their sole mistress, she was to exercise so great an influence.

Alice remained much longer at Ellsmere than she had at first intended. The kind old earl became almost as a second father to her, and every day, as it passed, left her happier than the one before. Lord Clarendon was often absent; and it was then that Alice began to feel his inestimable worth, and to long for his return with an impatience that she could not control.

'T was the evening before her departure for Ashleigh, and the young heiress stood alone in the pale moonlight, on a balcony that led from the library, where she had left the earl quietly sleeping in his arm-chair. Her guardian had been called to London on business, only a few days before, but had been expected back during the day; and Alice was still hoping that he would come, though his father had assured her he could

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not now arrive till the morning. She had often gazed upon the same scene which she now looked upon, in company with her guardian; and, while listening to the expression of his lofty thoughts, had felt higher and holier aspirations than had yet entered into her past life, and learnt to look upon her father's sudden death with more calmness, and to feel that to her the world was not yet all darkness. She looked upon the tranquil beauty of the night; and a sense of its holiness was stealing over her, as her mind reverted to the past, so endeared by the pleasant companionship of him who had passed away to that sudden call which she could never bear to dwell upon; to the blank that followed; to the present, made calm and peaceful by the influence of him to whose care her father had intrusted her;— and her heart swelled with the deepest sense of gratitude, as she thought of all the numberless offices of thoughtful kindness which she had experienced at his hands. So absorbed was she by this idea, that she heard not the sound of carriage-wheels in the avenue, nor the quick step on the lawn beside her. The voice of him who was the object of her thoughts first aroused her, and she turned to welcome her guardian with glad surprise, but not without some confusion.

"In tears, Alice?" he said, as he took her hand. "How is this? You should not linger here alone, and give yourself up to sad thoughts. Besides, if this is, as you wrote me, your last night at Ellsmere, it should not be spent thus. Where is my father? I am afraid he is too indulgent to you, and allows you to be too much alone."

"Nay, you must not lecture me to-night, my lord; believe me, whatever sadness I have felt has been for my good." She paused a moment, and then continued, in a trembling voice, — "I have been thinking how much I owe to you, how very much. There is no way that I can hope to repay it; but I wanted to let you know that I am not insensible to it, — that you will ever have my deepest gratitude. I would ask your pardon for my wrong and hasty judgment in days gone by; and of that letter which I received from you before I went to Italy I have never had a chance to speak, to tell you with what feelings of remorse and sorrow I read it."

"Do not mention it again, Lady Alice, I beg of you; it can only recall unpleasant thoughts to both of us." He dropped her hand, which

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he had retained in his, and turned away, and Alice began to fear that she had offended him; but his next words showed she was mistaken. "Alice," he said, with a smile, "I have a request to make of you, which, I think, after what you have just said, you can hardly refuse me. It is this: that you will regard me as a brother; that you will always speak to me as such; and that, in whatever may happen to you in the future, you will always apply to me, should you need it, as to a brother, for counsel and sympathy. Will you promise me this, Alice?"

"Indeed I will, my lord! I think I should have done so, even had you not requested it."

"Thank you; but there should be no formal titles, you know, between brother and sister. Hereafter, I must be simply Percy."

Alice did not reply, for just at that moment the old earl, awakened from his nap by the sound of their voices, called her; and she entered the library, followed by her companion, who was warmly welcomed by a father that idolized him.

A few moments afterwards, Alice arose to retire to rest; and, as the earl kissed and blessed her, as had been her father's wont, and which always brought the tears to her eyes, she turned to Lord Clarendon with — "I heard you once express a wish for a miniature likeness of your sister. When I was in Italy, to please my father, I paid some attention to painting; and have tried to copy that beautiful portrait of her which is in the gallery. Your father thought I had succeeded very well. If such is your opinion, I trust it may serve as a pleasant memorial to you of the very happy days which I have spent at Ellsmere."

The young lord took the miniature which his ward handed to him, which was beautifully set in pearls. "'T is a most perfect copy," he exclaimed, "and very beautifully done. How can I ever sufficiently thank you for this, Alice?" and one of those bright, rare smiles illumined his face, as he bent his eyes upon her.

"There is no need of any thanks, my lord; I am more than repaid, if you think it a good copy. Good-night!" and Alice hurriedly left the room.

Her guardian gazed at the miniature long and earnestly, and then, passionately kissing it three or four times, began pacing the room backwards and forwards, in a most agitated manner, perfectly unmindful of

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his father, who gazed in wonder on the emotion of his usually calm, self-possessed son; but, supposing it to be all caused by the recollection of one whom he knew he had idolized while living, said to him gently, "Percy, could Alice see you now, I am afraid she would regret having given you the picture. She little thought it would recall any painful feelings. Dear girl! she was so anxious to finish it before she left, so afraid you would not think it well done! O, Percy! how much I shall miss her! She has supplied my lost darling's place to me, as none other could."

"She is an angel!" said his son, vehemently.

"'T is a dangerous office, Percy, you have," replied the earl, half playfully; "guardian to so beautiful a girl. I am sure, if I were in your place, I should have lost my heart, long ago."

"Stop! in mercy, stop, father!" exclaimed Clarendon, with startling energy. "Dangerous office! yes, it is indeed to me, far more so than you could imagine; and there are times when I have to struggle with feelings which almost overpower me, and make me shrink from the duties of that office."

"What mean you, Percy?" said the earl, alarmed by his wild manner.

"Mean! Why, this,—that I love, madly love Alice! that I have loved her for years, hopelessly!"

"Do not say hopelessly," replied the earl, soothingly, laying his hand affectionately upon his son's shoulder. "She must, she cannot help loving you, in time, if she does not now."

"Bless you for the words, my dear father! I have sometimes dreamt that it might be so, but I fear it is too bright a dream ever to be realized. But how selfish I am, keeping you up far beyond your bed-time! Good-night! do not look so anxious;—I have borne it for years, and can bear it to my grave, if needs must be." And, with a fervent pressure of the hand, Lord Clarendon took up his candle, and went to his own room.

At the earnest request of Alice, her return to Ashleigh was as quiet as though she had left it only the day before; for any pomp or show would have been little in unison with her feelings. And the peasantry, though much disappointed, had to content themselves with only a glimpse

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of a pale face that looked sadly forth from the plain travelling carriage, while the deep mourning of the grooms made them turn away, with tears in their eyes, as they remembered the kind master who had passed away forever.

Alice entered the noble halls of her ancestors with many painful emotions. Three years had passed since she had left, a gay, thoughtless girl, with the brightest anticipations before her, and with one by her side ever to counsel and guide. Now she had sought it a sorrowing woman and alone; yet not alone, except so far as that kind teacher was no more; for there was one near, whose chiefest thought was her happiness, whose eye ever anxiously followed her. And Alice felt, without looking up, that it was upon her now, and, for the sake of him, whom her father had loved so well, she forced down feelings that were almost overpowering her, to return the respectful greeting of the old servants, who, in their affection and sympathy, crowded around her.

It was a noble effort, and, much as it cost her to make it, it was but the first of many that followed during the year, and which, in the end, served to strengthen and purify her character. She carried out all the wise and beneficent plans of her guardian, devoting her time to the good and improvement of those around her. She visited herself the poor and needy, unselfishly forgetting her own bereavement and sorrow, as she cheered and comforted them. She neglected none, and one and all yielded to her gentle influence. Like some bright angel she went amongst them, and the poor were made comfortable, the unhappy soothed, and the sinful penitent.

Schools were established for the little children, and Alice superintended them herself; and there was not one of those youthful scholars, but felt sufficiently rewarded by her sad, sweet smile, for any hard task accomplished.

Thus a year flew quickly by. And Alice was leaning out, one evening, at one of the drawing-room windows, gazing upon the river where, just four years before, she had been rescued from a watery grave. How much change there had been in those few years! Any one who had seen her then and now could read it in her face. There was the same old truthful look in those dark eyes; but far more of earnest thought, and less of that flashing brilliancy. The cheek was not so round and full; its

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very paleness spoke of sorrow; and the mouth, around which the archest dimples and sunniest smiles were ever wont to play, now expressed a sweet seriousness, which rarely broke into a smile of merriment. In a distant window sat Lord Clarendon; and, as Alice recalled the scene upon the water, she thought of her noble preserver, and how much she owed to him since; and something more of sadness stole over her face as she thought he would soon be far away from her, for he had just been telling her of some business that would call him to Italy. She turned to where he sat, with his head leaning upon his folded arm. Softly she crossed the room, and stood beside him. "My lord," she said (for she had never yielded to his request that she would call him Percy), "I fear you are not well, you look so pale. Do not leave us to-morrow! Stay a while at Ashleigh; I am sure the air here must do you good."

"Ah, Alice! you little know what you ask. Every hour that I spend here is a dear-bought happiness."

"What do you mean, my lord?" said Alice, in a faltering tone, shrinking back.

"Shall I tell you what I mean?" he answered, with a keen glance. "No, no! I will not,—it would only pain you!" he added, rising, and pacing the room with an agitated step.

"My lord, I insist upon your telling me. If it is anything painful, give me the opportunity of showing you that your lessons of cheer have not been wholly thrown away."

He stopped before her, in the deepest emotion. "'T is told in a few words, Alice; and you may imagine, in some measure, how much I have suffered, when I tell you that I have loved you devotedly for years!—from the first time that I saw you. I will not speak of the deep mortification and pain your scorn caused me. I do not blame you for it; I cared little in general for the opinion of others concerning myself, but that you should think harshly of me I could not bear. Perhaps it was a foolish idea that led me to write that letter, but it was a feeling I could not resist. Your father read my heart, and pitied me. With his dying breath he confided you to my care, and hoped that one day you would give me the right to protect you forever;—but you are weeping,—forgive me for paining you thus!"

"Go on, if you please," interrupted Alice.

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"I have little more to say. I need not tell you how proud I have been of that trust, nor how it has ever been my first thought to fulfil it faithfully. But now, on this your twenty-first birth-day, my guardianship is partly at an end, and I must leave you, unless," he added, in a low tone, as he caught sight of her averted face, "you bid me stay."

"Then, stay!" said Alice, in tremulous tones. "Do not leave me!"

"I fear you do not understand me," said her guardian, coloring deeply. "O, Alice! let no mistaken sense of duty, no feeling of gratitude, no tender regard for a dear father's memory, influence you now."

She looked up quickly, with eyes that were swimming with tears. "Who would have thought, my lord, that you could be so suspicious? Let this convince you," drawing, as she spoke, a miniature from her bosom; and, as she marked his quick and eager gaze, she asked, half playfully, "Can you doubt me still?"

"Doubt you!" he answered, in the deepest emotion, as he drew her towards him; "my own, own Alice, forever now! But tell me, where did you get this picture?"

"I copied it from your portrait in the gallery at Ellsmere, when I did your sister's for you!" and, as the blushing girl hid her face on his shoulder, Clarendon felt that all his past suffering was rewarded by that one blissful moment.

Years have rolled on, and the trusting maiden has become the fond wife and mother; and through the stately halls of Ashleigh echo the merry shouts and laughter of children, and never more merrily than when Uncle Herbert—a familiar appellation which they bestowed upon Mr. Wilton—was among them. He was a very frequent visitor at Ashleigh, seeking the happiness there that was denied him in his lonely home at Beechwood, where it seldom suited his wife's pleasure to sojourn, she seeming to have become wedded to the gay world of London society. Though there were times, in her casual visits to Ashleigh, when she marked the perfect happiness of Alice and her noble husband, with a vague idea of living for something better; but which all passed away, as she lost the influence that had aroused it. And Alice, rich in all the blessings that this life can give, was far happier than in the days

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of her sunny girlhood; for out of much sorrow had come this happiness. And with him who had first spoken of peace to her suffering heart ever by her side to counsel and guide, she remembered the past as a warning to the future, to which she looked forward with a calm trustfulness in a higher power, ever keeping in view the beautiful lesson her noble husband had taught her, — that of doing good to the many who came within her influence.

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THE WINDS AND I

BY OSCAR G. HUGHAN.

Sigh, ye winds,
That naught unbinds
Your mighty arms,
That ye may dash,
With shivering crash
And wild alarms,
Across the world!
Moan, moan through the willow!
I, from my pillow,
Will mock and disdain
Your mournfullest strain!
For, deep in my heart
The adders of care
Their venomed-tongues dart,
And never forbear!
Blow out, ye winds!
The clouds hang on high,
Like imbecile minds,
Watching you sigh!
Toss them down loudly
Into the deep;
Make the waves proudly
Over them leap!
Howl, ye roused winds!
Let your anger be sated;

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We are two minds
Most fittingly mated!
Move o'er the roaring linn,
Lie on its breast;
The whirlpool will suck it in,
Let not it rest!
Walk through the cane-brake
With terrible stride;
Even for *my* sake
Scatter it wide!
Take hold of the oak's crest,
And rend it in two;
But my heart, in its unrest,
Is wayward as you!
Dash over the billow with lightning pace,
And lift the seething waves,
Till they throw the spray in the moon's pale face!
From the deep demon caves,
Shriek out, shriek out,
In your horrible rout!
Make the seaman pause,
As he sees his bark
Drive through the dark
To Death's wide-open jaws!
Rend, as you fly
Through the trembling sky,
The canvas that's not rent;
Shatter the mast
With your fiercest blast,
That has wrestled with your power!
Throw to the scowling firmament
The records of the hour!
Drown by your shrieks the mariner's prayer,
Laugh at his mad alarms;
Point to the flood that's panting there
To clasp him in its arms!

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And when the storm has passed away,
Go to the ruined turret gray,
And moan, among the ivied towers,
The saddest of your eerie hours.
And I shall glide
To your sorrowing side,
And sigh and weep,
Through the darkness deep!
Or, should you go to the haunted stream,
That wanders past the blooming lea,
Where the moonlight sleeps in a happy dream,
No other home but that for me!
In storm or in calm, in joy or in woe,
I'm with ye, wild winds, wherever ye go!

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THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

BY PAUL DE VERE.

"Be it ever so humble, there 's no place like home."

"O DEAR, O dear! this 'ere 's about the awk'ardest kind of a creetur I ever laid hands on!"

The speaker was old Mr. Meekins, and the "creetur" was a calf. Mr. Meekins was a good old man, whom everybody loved, from the time he first came to Constantiæ, with his sweet young wife, till now, when the young have grown old, and he has grown gray, and the church-yard sod has grown green over his Mary's fair brow.

"I know," continued he, "'t an't right to git cross, and I did n't use to, once; but, somehow, since I growed old, I can't help it so easy. But come, Polly!" (that was the calf's *christened* name) "come, let's git along!" and with that he seized the string hanging from his companion's cranium with one hand, clutched at the tail with the other, and pulled at both with all his strength, to assist her onward movements. But Polly, disdaining his aid, turned round very suddenly, causing the old man's feet to describe a complete circle.

This again ruffled his temper, and made him more determined on success than ever.

On the other hand, the law of sympathy so developed itself in Polly's mind, that, in proportion as *his* firmness increased in one direction, *hers* strengthened in another; but, after a time, his superior strength prevailed, and, with a good deal of struggling, brought them to the bottom of the lane, where stood the old man's house.

He had built it when he was young, lived there all his days, and

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kneeling morning and evening by its gray old hearth-stone, prayed that now he was old he might end his life there.

Ah, it was a *dear old* homestead, this brown cottage, with its ivy-grown roof! Mr. Meekins stopped now and gazed for a moment on its dear walls, and sighed bitterly; for he thought some day the ivy might creep among the *ruins* of that cherished home.

Little Sally, his pet grandchild, was seated at the window which looked up the lane. It was a beautiful autumnal afternoon, and she had been watching the sunshine and the flowers, and listening to the songs of the bright-winged birds, and the fairy whispers from the streamlets. Everything was happy, save her own little heart, and that was very sad. She had seen the old man and Polly coming down the lane, and tears — childish, indeed, but none the less bitter — had fallen heavily; for it was *her own* Polly, her birth-day present from grandpa, and many an hour she had played with it 'neath the shade of those hanging trees; but, O, it could never be again! 'T was this that made her weep. But the old man is standing outside the house now, and she dries her tears, and tries to look happy.

Ah, now she catches his eye; but she smiles, and beckons him to go on.

He too smiles, but very sadly, and then turns and brushes a tear from his aged cheek, as he and Polly pass slowly along.

The little girl saw that tear, and *felt* it in her heart. Often had she seen him in sorrow; often followed him to the grave of his dead wife; often heard him say, as he gazed on the vacant seats round the old hearth-stone,

'O, for the joys of the good old times,
The dear old times of yore!
Yet they come not back, as once they came;
They sleep, to wake no more!"

And at such times, the dear child, stealing to his feet, would look up with her clear blue eyes into his own, and mind him how her grandma used to say:

"The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head!"

Even now, she forgot all her own troubles, the moment she saw the

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dear old man in sorrow. Would you know *why* the pet calf was sold, and the big tear in the old man's eye ?

Let us enter the house, and we shall see for ourselves. The furniture, though scant, is yet so neat and clean that at once we know woman in all her purity still lingers here, though the incense-fires are burned away on the shrine of her household gods, leaving but the ashes of desolation.

Yes, here she lingers, true to her mission, hoping and praying still. Heaven grant her prayers may be answered, and a joy-gleam once more brighten her sorrowful lot!

Where'er we look, in this cheerless abode, we see all things seem under the spell of a fierce and deadly curse, — the curse of rum. You read it in the broken chair-rounds and window-panes, the cracked earthens, and the bare feet and patched garments of the little ones. But, more than all, you read it in the mother's pale and care-worn brow, as she sits at the rickety pine table, sewing busily, wearily.

And, even as she sews, a prayer goes up to the God of love, that He will bless her children, her stricken ones, and gather them into His glorious fold. And white-winged angels are lingering there ; and the prayer trembling on those thin lips is wafted, on unseen pinions, to the throne of the Great All-Father !

Little Sally, too, hears the murmured words, and sees the tears falling over the coarse shirt in her mother's lap. "O, mother," whispers the little one, "please don't cry ! It makes us feel dreadfully, — and we're going to have *plenty* of money soon, dear mother ! Grandpa's gone to sell my Polly, and then *shan't* we be rich ?"

"God bless you, my child ! I don't cry for myself, but for you and the children ; but, darling, if I had known it, you should n't have sold your pet. Did n't you love her *very* much ?"

"Yes, mother, but I thought of you, and Tom, and the baby, and I did n't seem to love Polly at all."

O, what a kiss that was which the mother pressed upon her child's fair brow ! In after years she might linger in vain for one so fond ; but never on earth could it be given, when once her *mother's* lips were cold and still 'neath the kirk-yard sod. O, it 's a beautiful thing to think how all along life's roughest paths grow fresh warm heart-flowers !

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On cold, rugged cliffs they grow, watered by tears; or in the hard, sandy soil of poverty, like the acacia,

"Lonely and sweet, nor loved the less
For flowering in a wilderness."

But we are dreaming over what was sad reality to the group at the old homestead.

Poor old Mr. Meekins arrived, at last, at the butcher's stall, and sold him the little pet calf; but the butcher did not see — for he did not look — that there were big tears on the old man's withered cheeks. It was nothing for him to *buy* a calf, — he bought them every day; and why should he suppose 't was anything for Mr. Meekins to *sell* one?

Carelessly he turned away, and the old man looked at the money lying in his palm, brushed the tears away, and went toward the home his son had made desolate. Poor old man! he loved his Elisha, and he loved Elisha's wife, and the children. Though he was rich once, he had made himself poor for their sakes.

He had given them his money, his stock, his produce, and, more than all, for their sakes he had mortgaged the old homestead.

For three long years he had never ceased to hope that Elisha would reform; but hope was almost dead now, for his son spent most of his time with the pioneers in the forest, since they always supplied him with the "fire-water," and seldom returned home, save to procure the means of gratifying his unhallowed appetite.

It was evening, and all the family, save him who should have been their guide, were gathered round their frugal board. Sally's calf had furnished the supper; and Mrs. Meekins brushed the tears from her eyes, as she hurriedly asked, "Father, have you heard anything of Elisha? It is ten days since he left, and he does not often stay so long."

"No, I have heard nothing!" and the old man sighed.

"Father's *very* cruel, an't he, grandpa, to treat ma so, and make Sally sell her calf?" Thus queried little Tom, a boy of about ten.

"O, no, father is n't cruel, but loves you all very much. He ought not to drink so, and then he would n't stay away from home; but, *poor* man, it 's his failin', and I hope he 'll git better of it. I had the same failin' myself once, when *I* was young!"

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"Then father really does love us!" said little Tom. "O, then, that's what my teacher meant, when he said our parents whipped us because they loved us."

"But," interposed Sally, "is it because father *loves* us that he stays away, and gives us nothing to eat, and then acts so when he *does* come home? If that's it, I don't want him to love *me*."

"Nor I," chimed in the others; and the old man could not answer, so he turned to Mrs. Meekins, and said, "What a pity it is that Elisha *won't* keep sober! He 's such a good surveyor, and might have had charge of the Erie Canal, at ten thousand a year, if he 'd kept from drink!"

"Yes, or five thousand for the Oswego," remarked the stricken wife; "but there he is now, I hear him singing at the door. Children, run to bed before your father comes in."

They were preparing to do so, when the so-called father reeled in, and commanded the trembling little ones to stay.

"Don't you see I've brought company?" said he, pointing to a man that stood holding himself up by the door-post. "That's Mr. Swizzle, my best friend!"

"Hic — yes," returned Mr. Swizzle, grasping the door-post still tighter; "this — hic, hic — this is my very best friend."

Now, Mr. Swizzle might once have been a good-looking man; indeed, he thought himself so now, for said he, "Hic — an't I handsome? Take a view o' me! I'm poor now; but the scent of the roses, it clings to me still."

The children, poor things, did n't smell any *roses*, — nothing but brandy, — and they wondered what he *did* mean.

There he stood, toes, knees, and elbows out, and hat knocked in, talking like a philosopher. "Come in, Mr. Swizzle, come in," said Elisha, taking him by the arm; and this he immediately did; or, rather, being disengaged from his support, he fell in, and his long body reached almost across the room.

"Hem, hic, — the greatest have to fall sometimes," said Mr. Swizzle, as they placed him in a chair. "Hic — Meekins, — I say, Meekins, — have n't you got any brandy? — hic — that 's all I want — hic —

'Man wants but little here below,
But wants that little STRONG!'"

"Very strong!" returned Elisha. "No use, if it an't strong. But why don't they bring the brandy? Strong as Samson — let's go and see about it!"

With that, he tried to rise; but the law of attraction seemed toward the chair, and three times he involuntarily sat down, and laughed. But being at last on their feet, they took each other's arms, and between them described a few right-angles and semi-circles, knocked down a few chairs, performed some vigorous gymnastic feats, and finally passed out at the door; each one telling the other he could n't walk straight, and interlarding all with snatches of the song —

"We wont go home till morning,
Till day-light doth appear!"

When they had gone, the old man knelt down, and, 'mid the sobs and tears of all the little circle, invoked the blessing of Him who was once called "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief!"

Little Tom was only ten years old; but though no one ever said so, he *felt* that his father was cruel, for he knew it was that father's conduct which brought them misery and want, and made his mother look so pale.

He had often heard her speak of her kind friends in Vermont; and he wondered very much how far away was Sudbury, the fair town of his mother's birth-place.

Once, when his mother was very sad, he asked if she thought her friends in Sudbury would help her, if they knew she was so poor. "O, yes, indeed, — I know they would!" and his mother's eyes filled with tears, at the thought of all their love.

"Then, mother, may n't I go and tell them, and then you 'll be happy!"

"O, my boy, you know not what you ask! Sudbury is more than five hundred miles from here, and it 's a wild, bad road; you could never find the way. But God bless your fond, true heart, my poor boy!"

"But O, mother," pleaded the little fellow, "*do* let me go! I *know* I could walk there; and I can't bear to have you and grandpa so very poor!"

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"My poor child, it's impossible. When you are older, you will see how it is; and, beside, they would blame your father, and then I should be unhappy."

The next day after this conversation, Elisha returned home, and, to his wife's great joy, remained sober for several days. He was a good surveyor, and there were many anxious to procure his services; and in this short interval several offers were made to him, one of which he accepted.

It was an appointment from government, and the scene of his labors was to be about a hundred miles from his home. Hither he determined to take little Tom, whom he intended to make a surveyor.

In a few days they set out on their journey. Tom was in high spirits, for his father had resolved to take no brandy with him. But, at the close of his journey, Elisha soon found that his two assistants had bountifully supplied themselves, and his resolve to abstain was not proof against so strong a temptation. What was little Tom's situation now? There in the wild forest, fifty miles from the nearest house, with no friend to care for him, save God; for, instead of caring for *him*, these three men, one of whom he called father, were so brutalized by their vice, that they depended on the poor child for protection. But well did he perform his part. By night he kept a bright fire burning in the camp, to frighten away the wild beasts, who made their lairs in that dense forest; and by day he gathered nuts and roots, to feed those three unconscious beings.

They remained three days stupefied by their debauch, and on the fourth they said they would go to work. Joyfully Tom remained in the camp to prepare their dinner, from some birds his father had that morning shot. But the day lengthened into evening, it grew dark, and they did not come; but, taught in the school of sad experience, Tommy knew that it was rum which kept them, and, running from the camp, he shouted "father!" with all his strength. His tremulous voice sounded through the forest, but he heard no reply, save the howling of the wolves. He wandered further on, and shouted again. This time a voice from below him growled out, "What do you want?"

Tom found it was his father, and by his side lay one of the other men, fast asleep. He led, or rather dragged them to the camp, and then asked them where the other man was. They could give him no answer; and, after replenishing the fire, he sallied again into the forest, to renew

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the search. Close to the camp was a deep ravine, over which he could not pass, except by crawling along a tree, which had fallen across it. Over this he clambered, anxiously looking around him; but his search was in vain. He was thinking of returning, when he stumbled over a log, dropped the fire-brand which he held in his hand, and extinguished it.

It was very dark, with no moon overhead, and he knew not which way to turn. But he perceived the fire burning in the distance, and hastened towards it. The wolves were howling all around him, and he heard some wild thing or other pursuing him with terrible speed. But terror put wings to his flight, and at last he arrived at the camp in safety.

The next morning he renewed the search, and about noon he found, not the man himself, but some remnants of his clothing, and some bones left there to whiten, as a monument against intemperance. Tom returned to the camp, and told his story, fondly hoping they would pursue a different course; and so they did for a few days.

They often talked of their lost companion, and Elisha had a faint recollection of his having said he would go and take a walk. Poor man, it was his last!

A week had passed, and once more the tempter came, to lead them captive at his will. It was night, and they had not returned to the camp.

Little Tom, overcome by weariness, fell asleep, and woke not till morning.

But who can tell the agony of that waking? — for he found himself all alone!

The sunshine streamed over the green grass and through the foliage of the trees, the birds sang, and the insects fluttered, but all around him in the dense solitude there was no sight nor sound of man. A thousand fears rushed through Tom's mind; but most of all he shuddered lest his father and the man with him had met the same fate as their companion. The whole of that day he searched for them, but all in vain! His father was not there, nor could Tom find the least trace of him. All that night Tom lay by the camp-fire, and sobbed, and cried. But, lonely and desolate as he was, he sorrowed not for himself, but for his father.

That father had shown the poor child but little love; and yet Tom's

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childish heart clung to him with earnest tenderness. For three days he continued the search; for three nights he scarcely slept.

By night he formed his plans, and by day he executed them; but they did not bring his father back. At last, being fully convinced that he was indeed alone, his thoughts reverted to his own condition. He considered his ignorance in what direction his home lay, and that, if he strove to find it, each step might be taking him further from assistance, and his heart sunk within him. Those only who have known what it is to be utterly lost in the vast forests of the west can imagine his emotions. He had no compass,—his father had taken that; and, even if he had had one, it would have assisted him but little. He thought over his situation, and then said to himself, "I'll stay where I am. I can live in the camp till winter sets in, for I shall have plenty of nuts and berries, and may be some one will come before that, and take me home." He made the camp as secure as possible, and then spent the days in searching for food.

The ninth night after he had lost his father, he went to sleep, as usual, on the ground by the camp-fire; but during the night a heavy rain fell, and, awakening about daylight, he found his fire out, and himself thoroughly drenched in the water with which the camp was rapidly filling.

He thought, at first, that he should be drowned; but, going out of the camp, he perceived that he could easily ascend a little eminence near by, where he could be safe all day.

What he should do when night came, he knew not; but, kneeling there on the wet ground, he prayed, as his mother had long ago taught him to do, when he was in trouble.

Every day since his father had been lost, he had gone about shouting with all his might, in the vain hope that some one would hear, and come to his relief. On this occasion, on arriving at the top of the hill, he called out at the top of his voice, though he had ceased to hope for a reply. He listened, however, as usual; and, O! how his little heart beat, when he thought he heard, far away in the distance, and scarcely audible, a voice replying to him! Then he shouted again; and *how* he listened! No! he was *not* mistaken. The voice replied, and it was coming nearer. O, how he laughed, and jumped, and shouted! and nearer, nearer came the voice, guided by his cries, till at last a man

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came in sight. Tom ran eagerly towards him, and sank sobbing, then fainting, in the arms of his father.

No, the lost ones were not dead! They had wandered away under the influence of rum, lost their compass and papers, and could not find their way back to the camp. But, fortunately, they met with other surveyors, who had taken care of them ever since they had been in search of the lost boy. O, how warmly gushed a father's love in Elisha's heart, and he blessed and thanked God for the first time in years, and resolved that he would never more be the slave of intemperance!

The next day they set out for home; and how Mrs. Meekins' poor, tried heart thrilled for joy, and how happy were the children! for the wife saw her husband as when she was first his bride; and the little ones no longer feared the father, whose hand rested so gently on their curling locks. How they laughed, and cried, as they sat on his knee and kissed him, while his heart bled, as he thought how he had wronged them, till he too wept! For several days he staid with them, and resolved never to grieve them more. But at last the time came for him to return to his labor, and with a last fond kiss he bade them all farewell.

Yes, it was, indeed, the last! The sun had broken through the clouds, and shone a moment, only to be hidden, the next, behind their blackest folds!

In a few days news came that Elisha had been taken ill in the woods, ere he reached his place of destination, and had died.

But the last words that trembled on his lips were a blessing for his family, and a prayer for forgiveness. He was brought home and buried; and then, indeed, the old homestead was a desolate place. But time passed on, and he was in a measure forgotten by the children; and daily the mother struggled with new trials. In the winter she obtained a support for them by taking in sewing. But her employer failed, and she could procure no more.

The poor old man was very feeble, and unable to leave the house; and the next day saw Mrs. Meekins, weak in body, but strong in a mother's deathless love, travelling through the snow to a place twenty-five miles distant, in search of work. She had told the children that she would be back in three days; but an unseen hand ordered it otherwise. She was

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taken sick, and could not return. The little ones anxiously awaited their mother's arrival; for, after the third day, they had nothing to eat, and no means to purchase anything.

It was a sorrowful sight; a sick old man, and five helpless children, the eldest scarcely more than ten, and the youngest an infant.

Not a neighbor knew how they were situated. The old man shrank from the thought of receiving assistance, and Tom was too proud to tell any one; but at last his love for the others conquered his pride. He took little Tony, wrapped his feet in the pieces of an old shirt, and sent him to the nearest neighbor to ask for some bread.

Tony went into the house and sat down; but, poor little fellow, he dared not ask them. But they were at dinner, and gave him a large piece of bread to eat. He immediately ran home with it, and Tom gave it to the baby and the younger ones, sending Tony back for more.

The little boy went in and took a seat as before; but this time the people, thinking he acted very strangely, questioned him, and he told them the whole story. They were very poor themselves. It was in the year 1812, during the war, and provisions were very scarce. But they gave Tom half a corn loaf; and O, how delighted he was with it! He was running home with his treasure, full of joy, when his foot slipped, he fell down, and the corn loaf was broken in pieces, and crumbled in the snow. Tony gathered a few quite large crumbs for his grandfather, and went crying home, and told his story. Sorrowfully they heard it, and then they went out in the snow, those poor children, and *gathered up the crumbs!*

O! you who fare sumptuously every day, did you ever think there are thousands who would gladly pick up the crumbs which fall from your table? If not, think of it now, and never again forget to help the poor!

The children's situation becoming known, kind neighbors took care of them till their mother came back; and then, though they were very poor, they helped her too; and He saw it who has said, "A cup of cold water given in His name shall never lose its reward." For His sake the poor neighbors did it, and in Him the mother trusted, knowing that "He doeth all things well!"

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The snow had fallen fast during the night, and when morning broke the fences and shrubbery were buried beneath it. Large drifts had fallen in various places, and rendered travelling almost impossible. The rich sat in their comfortable parlors, with the heavy crimson curtains looped back from the French windows, half buried in luxurious arm-chairs, and talking cheerfully as they watched the storm. But there were poor hearts sadly beating, as the snow o'erwrought brown field and straw-roofed cabin with its fairy-like tracery.

Through the crevices of their uncomfortable homes the piercing wind found its way, and the fires burnt low and dim upon their hearth-stones, because, poor souls, they had little wood; and, as they looked forth, all nature seemed turning pale, and wailing of their dreary lot.

But some there were who thought of the Divine Christ-child in the manger, and hoped on still. They thought how the spring would come again, and unbind those chains of ice, and melt the drifting snow; how the valleys would grow green and greener in the sunshine, and the sweet-breathed flowers spring up to kiss the wimpling burns.

Even so, they thought, would summer, and warmth, and joy, and heart-sunshine, come back to their desolate home. So hoped and so dreamed the group at "the old homestead," when that morning their hymn of thanksgiving had passed through the stormy sky. They knew it was borne to One who, long ago, promised to be "a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless." And when the old man rose from his knees, it was cheering to hear him say,

"Come, my children, we are poorer to-day than we have ever been before; and yet we have been provided for hitherto, and we need not fear now!"

"Grandpa," said little Tom, "I wish you and mother would let me go to Vermont, and then we should have mother's friends to help us!"

"No, dear, you must n't think of such a thing; you 'd be lost before you 'd gone ten miles!" and the big tears slowly gathered in the old man's eyes, as he silently rested his hand on the poor child's head. But the brave little fellow had seen those he loved almost starving, till now he thought the time had come for a plan he had formed in his own head to be executed.

"Sally," said he, when they chanced to be alone, "you know I 'm

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most eleven years old now; and you know I can chop wood nicely, and do a great many little things about a farm; and now, if you 'll promise not to tell, I 'll tell you what I 'm going to do." The pledge was given, and Tom continued. "Sally, I 'm going to try to get some work. I want you to get my straps to put round my pants, to keep out the snow. My leaping-pole is outside the door, and I 'm going right down to Mr. Gable's to see if he won't give me some work."

Mr. Gable was a farmer, who lived about five miles distant. The nearest way to his house was across the lake, and this route Tom intended to take. Sally was delighted with the idea, and quickly fixed on his straps; and then the little boy went into the room where all the family were sitting, and kissed his mother, and kissed his grandpa, and kissed them all, and then went back to Sally. But Tom had kissed them all a great many times before, so they did not think much about it now.

"Now, Sally," said he, "if I have good luck, I shall be back by dark; and be sure you don't tell anybody." Then he kissed Sally, and walked away.

Sally watched Tom skipping through the storm with his pole, and saw him pass out of sight. The tears came to her eyes, to think he must go through such a dreadful storm; but no one noticed her sadness,—she was only a child.

The old man had said they would be provided for that day, and he was not mistaken; for, on opening the front door, he found lying on the step a bag of potatoes, and a basket of salt meat, placed there by some poor Christian, who wished not to hurt their feelings, and found his reward in his own bosom. They had a good meal that day, and regretted that Tom was not there to share it; but he had been away before, and they doubted not but that he would be safe home again before dark.

But O, no! Night came, and he was still absent. The poor mother and the old man sat listening and watching for the absent one, with little Sally crouching at their feet. The clock struck ten — eleven — twelve, and still he came not! How often that anxious mother went to the door; how often she sobbed amid her prayers for her darling child, and asked Sally questions which could not be answered! But Sally knew the errand on which Tom had left, and she could keep the secret no longer.

Her mother listened to the story, and the tumult of her grief gave way

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to the desolate calmness of despair; for, she said, her boy loved her so well, she knew he would not stay away from her, if he was living. But the old man strove to comfort her.

"Your child," said he, "is in the hands of One better able to guard him than we are. If alive, God will preserve him; and if dead, O, he is happier still in heaven!" But the old man's voice trembled, and his eyes were dim with tears; for he himself scarcely needed a comforter less than the suffering mother he addressed.

Early in the morning, one of the neighbors went to Mr. Gable's, to inquire after Tom; but he brought back word that Tom had indeed been there, but left, early in the day, to return home. The mother expected such a tale, and it seemed to add nothing to her grief. For several days the kind neighbors searched for the body, but found it not. Everybody mourned for Tom; for everybody loved him, and knew his history. Many came to comfort the sorrowing family; and on New Year's Day, which soon came round, many a little present found its way to the old homestead.

Yes, it was New Year's Day; — and how many fond recollections came to the poor mother's heart, of her New Year's Days, long past, in her early home; of her husband's presents, in the days of their early love; and, more than all, of Tom, — for it was his birthday!

And the old man, too, — his memory had begun to fail; but, on this day of days, old recollections wove themselves around his heart, and half-forgotten voices sounded through its desolate chambers, like the sighing cadence of a dear old tune. On New Year's Day he first saw Mary; on that day he married her; and on that day she died. Ah! he can never forget New Year's Day till its sun shall shine over him, lying beside his Mary, far down under the snow, deep in the silent grave!

Weeks passed on, and the family at the old homestead lived on, partly by the scanty pittance which Sally and her mother earned by sewing, and partly by the kindness of their poor neighbors. Indeed, we often see in the poor a genuine charity, a true kindness of heart, in which the rich might well afford to take lessons. They would get the old man to their houses, and let him busy himself, though he could accomplish nothing, and then tell him their gifts were his pay. Ah! there *is* an eye that *sees*

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each deed of charity like this; and verily in the kingdom of heaven they shall not lose their reward.

Though Tom was never for one hour forgotten, yet there was genuine happiness at the old homestead; for those dim eyes were gazing upward towards "a mansion incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." It is evening there, and with them is sitting the village rector, a man of earnest, self-forgetting piety. Let us listen, and see if they will not teach us a lesson.

"Yes," said the good old grandsire, "yes,— we have much to be thankful for, even in this world. I can look back, ever since I was a boy, and see how a good hand has guided me!"

"Yes," added the poor widow, "God has indeed been a husband to me, and a father to my fatherless children; and if I can only see them living to love and serve Him, it's all the happiness I want!"

"Be of good cheer!" said the holy man; "God will not leave you desolate. 'I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.'"

Thus they talked, till, at last, the rector knelt and prayed with these his "sheep in the wilderness," gave them his blessing, and departed.

There are gay mansions in proud cities, where perfumed lamps shed a gorgeous glow over the rich tapestry, and bright eyes sparkle, and dark locks flash with diamonds; but few hearts beat there with the blessed happiness that brightens up the old homestead. For He, the holy One, who gave the rich their splendor, passes by "the proud, and gives grace unto the humble," and blesses the old homestead with the peace and love that whilom irradiated the lowly manger in Bethlehem of Judea!

Why should they not be happy? But yet brighter days shall come, when "the lost shall be found."

We left Tom when he bade good-by to Sally, as he started in search of work. Let us now return, and follow his fortunes.

It was, indeed, a perilous journey for him to cross that lake! More than once he sank to his waist in the snow-drifts; more than once he wished he had not left home; and yet the thought of home, and the suffering ones there, spurred him on. At last he arrived, and saw Mr.

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Gable; but the good man thought it could be only a childish notion, and would worry the lad's mother; so he told the little fellow he had no work for such little people as him, and bade him go home to his mother, and never venture out in such a storm again. But Mr. Gable did not see the look of determination that sat on Tom's face as he said good-by, nor could he read the thoughts passing in that little mind, else he might have called him back. Tom had told his sister that, if he got work, he should be back before dark; but he did not tell her what he should do, if he did not.

He had resolved, if Mr. Gable would not employ him, to go to Vermont; and he was glad when the farmer sent him back, since that was the turning-point of his undertaking. He had one shilling in his pocket, and with that he felt quite satisfied. He could make some friends, he thought; but he was so fearful of his plans being discovered, that he determined to avoid all persons, until he should be so far from home that he could not be known. It was winter, and the snow was very deep, and he asked himself, as he walked along, where he could sleep; but, just at night, he saw a barn in the distance, away from any house, and, entering that, he made his bed upon the hay, and passed there the first night.

But, at first, he could not sleep, for his thoughts wandered homeward. He seemed to see his dear mother waiting his return, and his grandpa, and Sally, and the little ones. He knew they could not tell why he kissed them so fondly before he left, and he knew they would think he was dead, and he thought how they would weep. For a moment, he resolved to go back; but, no,—he could not go home to see them so poor; and he prayed to God, who blesses little children, and sobbed himself to sleep on his hard bed.

Morning dawned brightly, and the sunshine sparkled over the snow; and Tom was happy, for he felt that he was doing rightly. He had nothing to eat, all that day; but, towards evening, he came to a log cabin, whose cheerful blaze invited the wanderer to enter.

Three times he walked round the little cabin; then, at last, he summoned courage, and knocked at the door, though he regretted it in an instant. But a good woman opened it, and asked him to come in.

"Now, my little man," said she, when she had placed him comfortably

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by the fire, "where did you come from, and where do you think you are going?"

"I came from Constantia," said Tom, "and I think I am going to Rome." But he did not tell her that from thence he intended to go on to Vermont.

"Lord bless you!" said the woman, "you 'll never get there! Does your mother know you 're going?"

"Yes!" said Tom; but his heart smote him, for he had told an untruth, for the first time in his life.

Supper was ready, and the family sat down. Tom also sat down with them, and ate heartily.

"How much money have you got, to take you to Rome?" asked the good woman's husband.

"A shilling," said Tom, producing the article.

"Why, you don't think *that* will take you there, do you? 'T won't more than buy you a meal!"

"No," answered Tom; "but, when it is gone, I mean to work!"

"Now, Bill," interrupted the good woman, "it 's no use worryin' the child! You see his mind 's set on goin'. But, bless the boy! he means to *work!*"—And then she laughed, and Tom could not guess what pleased her.

That night Tom slept in a good warm bed, and thankful enough he was. He clasped his little hands, ere he went to sleep, and asked forgiveness for his sin; and, said he, "No, I 'll never tell a lie again, though they *should* take me home for telling the truth!" At breakfast, next morning, Tom was served bountifully; and they were all so kind to him, that he began to love them very much.

When the meal was over, and the men went to work, Tom also went to work. When at home, his grandpa had taught him to make stick brooms, and had given him a large pocket-knife to cut them with; and he had it with him. So he dug round in the snow till he got some suitable sticks, and then went to the wood-shed, and cut away till evening, when he had six good brooms. These he intended to give, with his shilling, to the good people, for taking care of him.

The next morning, as he was ready to start, the kind woman packed him up a nice little bundle of provisions, and tied a worsted shawl around

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his neck; "For," said she, "you will feel the cold before you get to Rome!" She kissed Tom, and he offered her the money and the brooms; but the woman smiled, with the tears in her kindly eyes. "Bless the child!" said she, "I'd as soon take pay from those little children of my own as from you, you poor helpless child!"

So Tom tied his brooms and his bundle over his shoulders, and, bidding them all good-by, went on towards Rome.

Tom travelled on,—at night sleeping in barns, and by day subsisting on what was given him, though he always offered pay,—having sold his brooms, and added their price to his shilling. At last he arrived at Rome, and went to the tavern. He sat there, listening to the conversation of two men, and heard one of them ask the other how soon he thought they should get to Johnstown. "Johnstown!" thought Tom; "why, I've heard grandpa say that was one of the towns on the way to Sudbury!"—And he listened again.

"I don't know," said the other man; "the snow 's so deep it 's hard to tell what kind of sleighing we 'll have."

Tom's heart trembled with excitement, as he thought perhaps they would take him with them; and, going up to the one who seemed kindest, to his childish fancy, he said —

"Please, sir, are you going to Johnstown?"

"Yes," said the man. "Why do you ask, my boy?"

"Because, please, sir, I 'm going there, too."

"You!—you going to Johnstown! Who with?"—and the man rested his hand kindly on Tom's curling hair.

"All alone, sir," answered Tom.

"Alone!—why, where do you come from?"

"From Constantia, sir. And, please, sir, could you let me ride with you?"

"Why, child," said the man, smiling, "if you are really going, we 'll give you a ride." And he talked to the poor boy very pleasantly, till Tom felt he had found another friend.

The next morning they started; but the journey lasted several weeks, as the men stopped many times to transact business in the towns through which they passed. But, at last, they arrived at Johnstown, and Tom, parting with his kind friends with much regret, started, alone, for Sud-

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bury. The ice was partly melted, as he walked down Lake Champlain; but he got safely over, at last; and, when he came to some houses, and a man told him 'twas Sudbury, how his heart leaped for joy! And when he learned which was his uncle's house, he thought he had never in his life been so happy before.

He went up to the door, and, finding the family at dinner, asked if he might come in and warm himself. They not only permitted him to come in, but made him sit down to dinner. There were little children there, and a nice old lady, who sat down in her arm-chair, after dinner, and, taking her knitting, commenced to work away. Tom offered them his knife, to pay for his dinner; but they would not take it, and their kindness encouraged him.

"Well, little boy," said the old lady, rubbing her spectacles, and taking a full view of Tom, "and where did you come from?"

"From Constantia, ma'am," said Tom.

"Well, who brought you?"

"I came alone, ma'am." And then Tom related all his adventures on the road.

"Bobby," said the old lady, to a little grandson, about Tom's age,— "Bobby, come here!" — And then she told him that Tom was no older than himself, and yet had made a journey of nearly seven hundred miles, almost all on foot; and Bobby looked at Tom with a droll mixture of incredulity and childlike wonder.

"Let's see, Richard," said the old lady, to her husband, who sat, in another arm-chair, the other side of the hearth,— "Let's see. What county is Constantia in?"

"Oswego," answered the old man.

"Oswego county!" — and the old lady rubbed her glasses *very* thoughtfully — "Oswego county! Isn't that where Sally and her husband went to live? It is, sure!" — And she turned to Tom: "My child, did you ever know a man, in Oswego county, named Elisha Meekins?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Tom; "he was my father!"

The dear old lady threw down her knitting, — just as old ladies always do, on such occasions, — and the girls and the children all kissed their little cousin; and the old lady patted him, and called him her poor boy,

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her lost darling. When they were composed again, Tom told the sad history of the sorrow that had made his mother's cheek grow pale, to those who were able to relieve, and anxious to listen; and two days more saw Richard and Tom on their way to comfort the stricken ones at the old homestead.

Winter was preparing to leave. He gathered up his snowy mantle, and looked a cold good-by; while in the distance sweet spring stood smiling with her large blue eyes. Sally had put her flower-seeds in the ground, and went out every morning to see if they were springing up. Poor little Sally! Last year, Tom helped her sow the seeds, and then went with her to see if they were growing. She remembered *that*, and her tears fell down on the brown earth; for she thought birds, and flowers, and spring-time, might often come again, but she should never see again her brother Tom! She seemed to feel his last kiss on her lips, and, though everything around looked happy, her poor little heart went beating, in sad, slow cadence, to the dreams of the olden time.

Nor was the old man cheered by the gentle spring breeze, or the bright spring sunshine. How could he be?—for well he knew the mortgage on the old homestead was almost due, and, alas! he could not pay it. He could not tell his poor daughter-in-law; for he thought her weary heart had already grief enough to bear. But a day soon came when others told her, and in no gentle words.

The mortgage was foreclosed, at last, and the old homestead sold. It was indeed an unexpected blow; but the poor widow had lost husband and child, and she could bear to lose home.

The old man suffered most. They had notice to vacate the premises in a week, and the old man wandered up and down the house, moaning helplessly. Every room was linked with his Mary, and the days of their early love; and, as he had lived there with her when on earth, so he had prayed to die there, and go hence to dwell with her in heaven.

But the week had expired, and still the heart-broken family lingered; for, when they had left that nook, they had no home but the green earth, no shelter but the broad blue sky.

On the eighth day after the notice was served, a long, thin, and VERY

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charitable man stood in the old homestead, with a rough-looking Irishman by his side. It was the purchaser, and he had come to take possession.

"Madam," said he, bending his extreme lengthiness, and making an attempt at a bow, "why have you not left *my* house?"

The color mounted to Mrs. Meekins' pale cheek as he said "my house," for she could hardly realize before that it was another's; but she answered, calmly,

"I have not left, sir, because I had nowhere to go. I've lived here many years, and I've no other home for my poor children. O, sir, for the love of charity, do let them stay here a little longer!" and her hot tears fell upon the nicely-sanded floor.

"Charity!" said the long, thin man. "Ah, there you touch a tender chord! Probably you have seen my name in the papers, as the man who subscribed so liberally for the savages in the Pacific isles; or, may be you've heard of me as connected with the London Society for the Spread of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; but really, madam, though I am known to be full of charity, yet, in consequence of my late large subscriptions for the poor English and Irish, I am altogether unable to grant your request."

"But, surely, you won't send me into the street with my poor babes!" pleaded the weeping woman.

"Certainly, madam, nothing would rejoice me more than to see you go to a comfortable home; but duty and charity to myself require that you should leave my house at once. I'm sorry, madam; but you must perceive my argument to be very forcible, and, since you do not seem inclined to move your goods, duty compels me to do it myself; and so, Patrick," — turning to the Irishman, — "begin to take these things out. I'm very sorry, madam, — really very sorry, — but you will see it is necessary."

"An sure, sir," said Pat, who had all this time listened to the dialogue, "an sure, sir, it's not yourself that manes to turn the poor crathurs into the could strate?"

"Patrick O'Flynn," said the long, thin man, "do as I tell you, and don't talk to me!"

"Och, and your honor," said Pat, "I've allays done all ye tould me afore, but the Blessed Vargin ud niver forgive me a dade like this,"

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"Obey me, I say, directly!" cried the long, thin man, waxing angry; "obey me, or I'll do it myself, and turn you out of my house!"

"Fath, then," said Pat, "I'll have to lave ye; for it's niver the likes o' Patrick O'Flynn that'll do a dade like this; and, sure, if your honor does it, you'll see yer own ould mither turned out, some day, — och, and yer will!"

The long, thin man would have struck Pat now, if he had n't been so long and thin, and Pat so hard and so strong. As it was, he *looked* a great many daggers at him, and began to move the things out himself.

Pat walked away, and, meeting two strangers, told the whole story. The long, thin man was carrying out a large box, and puffed badly, for it was heavy; but it was changed to shouts in the next moment, for a strange man had hold of his ears, and was swinging his head like an inverted pendulum, while Mrs. Meekins and the old man stood looking on, wonderingly. But they did not look long; for a little boy rushed into the door, crying "Mother, dear mother!" and the wanderer rested his weary head once more, with tears and sobs, upon his mother's bosom.

And then they all blessed God, and forgot their grief, till another entered the house, and Mrs. Meekins was clasped to the heart of her father.

They are all happy now! What a change since the morning! — and their happiness did not end even here. The new-found grandfather was rich, and bought back the old homestead, and sent the children to school; so that, before he left, things around the old place looked happier than they had done in its brightest days. True, two dear ones had gone from their number into the spirit-land. The old man looked mournfully sometimes on his Mary's empty chair; and, now that flowers had come with the green summer-time, there was no gentle hand to bind rose-buds in Mrs. Meekins' long black hair. But there is a mournful pleasure in thinking of the dead, when we know they have gone before us to the Eden-land; and their memory seems only a golden link, drawing us heavenward.

Twelve months had passed since the little pet calf was sold, and again the grass grew long and green in that shady lane, and again the birds were singing, and the brook dancing, with the sweet flowers of the summer-time blooming along its banks.

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It was a beautiful summery afternoon, and the happy family were seated under a spreading oak-tree in that grassy lane. A snow-white cloth covered the ground, on which stood golden butter, in clear, sparkling spring-water, biscuits with a just perceptible shade of brown, delicate rows of anchovies nestled in parsley, and a great cake, with white frosting, and garland of flowers.

The happy mother is there with her children, for it is their pic-nic; and Sally and the children wonder what keeps grandpa so long, when suddenly he appears, and a glad shout rings from five merry voices, for grandpa is bringing along with him — *a calf!*

"Sally," said the old man, "it 's just a year to-day since I sold your Polly, and now I have brought you another."

Ah, but I see you *feel* it all, dear reader, and I need not stop to write of thanks and kisses, and how happy they all were; or how, when they sang Sweet Home, the voices trembled that mingled in the chorus, —

"Be it ever so humble,
There 's no place like home!"

Ah, they were happy now!

Years passed on, and the death-angel wove a glory around the old man's brow, and, with that sweet name "*Mary*" trembling on his lips, he passed away; and they laid him in the green church-yard, by Mary's side, with brier-roses and honeysuckles blooming over him, and wild birds singing a perpetual hymn of thanksgiving.

Sally, too, left their dear old home, for murmured words of tenderness had won her to rest her head on another one's bosom; and then Tom brought another Mary, with her kindly eyes, to gladden the old fire-side, where Mrs. Meekins still sat knitting; for, reader mine, they live and love still in the quiet shades of that dear OLD HOMESTEAD.

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CORA LYLE.

BY CLARENCE MAY.

When the children went a-Maying,
In the early summer-time,
And the streamlets seemed to murmur
To the flowers in softest rhyme,
And the earth was fresh and lovely,
Then I met thee, Cora Lyle!
Then I met thee, then I loved thee,
Gentle, gleesome Cora Lyle!

Through the long and dreamy summer,
'Mong the woodlands, birds and flowers,
We were roaming, — idly roaming, —
All the bright and sunny hours;
Ever roving, ever loving,
Ever dreaming, Cora Lyle!
Never thinking of the future,
Loved and winsome Cora Lyle!

Now the autumn winds are sighing,
And a gloom is on my heart;
For the words are sadly spoken —
You and I must ever part!
O, that I had met thee never,
Sweet and winsome Cora Lyle!
For those dreaming days are over,
And I am weary, Cora Lyle!

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Yet again I hope to meet thee
In that "better land" above,
Where "farewell" is no more whispered,
And 't is never wrong to love!
Still unchanging, here I 'll wander, —
Still will love thee, Cora Lyle!
But in heaven will I clasp thee,
Dearly-cherished Cora Lyle!

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LOVE'S DREAM TWICE TOLD.

BY ELLEN LOUISE.

"O, knowest thou, dear one, of woman's love,
With its trust that woes more deeply prove,
With its fondness wide as the limitless wave,
And chainless by naught but the silent grave?
With devotion as humble as that which brings
To his idol the Indian's offerings;
Yet proud as that which the priestess feels,
When she guards the flame of the shrine as she kneels,—
O, knowest thou, dear, what this love may be?
Such ever has been in my heart for thee."

MRS. EMBURY.

"O, there 's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream."

TOM MOORE.

"And the sunny eyes of the maiden fair
Gave answer, better than voice or pen,
That as he loved he was loved again."

C. C. LEEDS.

CHAPTER I.—THE DREAM.

COME away with me, gentle reader, far away from the city's din,—the ceaseless monotony of "bells, and wheels, and horses' feet, and no rest." Come where bright-winged birds are humming, and the golden-belted bee flits over southern flowers.

It is beautiful, this sweet home in fair Louisiana,—the wild luxuriance of nature, adorned with the refinement and elegance of art. Yonder the mighty Mississippi flashes between its verdant banks, flashes and hurries away. Tall, graceful trees bend over it, and the winds and waves seem murmuring tones of gentle music. But hark! I hear a

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sweeter voice. Faint, and soft, and musical as the whisper of the zephyr, it sighs, "You will forget me, Clarence!"

"Forget thee, dearest!" and closer to his heart he drew the gentle girl. "Ah, no! The sun may forget to shine; the sweet flowers forget to lift their dewy eyes, and tremble 'neath the kiss of the night-dew; but never shall my soul forget its first wild love for Ida Montgomery!"

The young man paused, and gazed for an instant into the sunny eyes, resting half mournfully upon his own. And when again he spoke, there was less of pride, less even of hopefulness, in the voice now subdued to its softest cadence.

"Nay, Ida, darling, it is *I* who should fear for *your* constancy! The fair and gifted daughter of General Montgomery will not want suitors for this little hand. Proud men will bow at thy feet, and the love of Clarence Lincoln, — ah, Ida! wilt thou not grow to deem it but a vain and childish dream? Nay, dearest, I will not pain thee thus!" and bending low, he kissed the tears from her brimming eyes, and clasped still more fondly the small white hand that lay trembling in his own. Ah, Ida, darling! ours are idle fears. But it 's so very hard to part; and six months will seem a weary age, without the love-light of thy sunny eyes. But you 'll not forget your plighted troth!— and let this diamond sparkle on that little finger, till, standing proudly by thy side, I can place another there, and call thee wife."

"O, Clarence!" and her fair form trembled in his clasped arms. "I *do* not, *will* not doubt thee! But there are such shadows round my heart! and to dream of being thine seems blending too much of heaven with this care-dimmed earth."

"Nay, dearest," murmured the young man, looking half reproachfully in her dark eyes; "for *my* sake, chase these phantom fears away! I would have one parting smile, to linger all these weary months, like a gleam of sunshine, round the musty folios of the dry old law!"

And Ida tried to smile at his cheerful pleading; but the struggle was too great, and, bursting into tears, she sobbed wildly on his bosom. O, what gentle words — all musical with love and tenderness — were spoken then! Words that could never, never again be so spoken; but whose echo would haunt the whole of their after lives, and be stilled only when the grave-sod should grow green and greener over hearts

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now all too wildly beating. And Ida listened, awed and subdued by their melody; and when at last she raised her head, a sunny, hopeful smile played over her fair brow, and round her exquisitely chiselled lips.

"That's right, dearest!" and Clarence's voice was low and soft. "That's right; I could not leave thee weeping! But we must part now, for I have far to ride to-night; and see, — these brown braids are already heavy with the night-dew!" and his hand rested caressingly on her dark locks.

There were few words of parting spoken, for love had a deeper language in the beating of those two hearts, as he held her trembling in his embrace, with his warm lips pressed to her pure brow. At last, with a long, lingering look of love in her deep eyes, he tore himself away, and was soon lost to view amid the windings of the forest road.

Still Ida lingered 'neath the trysting-tree. The smile around her lips grew more and more sorrowful, until, at last, she murmured, "Yes, he is gone; and only Thou canst tell, O God, how many weary weeks and days may pass ere I can see his smile again!" And, as she spoke, she drew from her belt a miniature, attached to a chain of gold, whose massive links glittered on her fair neck, in the warm, bright beams of the September moon.

As you gazed on it, you could see the calm, high brow, the chestnut curls, and the eagle glance, of Clarence Lincoln. Round his proud features lingered a gleam of tenderness, as if the artist had caught his expression while his heart was softened by a dream of love. Ida's face brightened as she looked on it with a smile of hopeful trust; and at last, replacing it in the folds of her snow-white robe, she vanished inside the noble mansion, with a gush of song trilling like bird-notes from her full, red lips.

O, what a glory seemed taken from the earth, when that young girl had gone and left the night to its loneliness! And yet Ida Montgomery was not beautiful as the *world* estimates beauty. There was little of regularity in her young, bright face; but you would long to press your lips to that fair brow, — not high, but broad and smooth, — such a brow as would win the hand of love to brush back her tresses, deepened into brown by the suns of seventeen southern summers, and rest caressingly on their rich waves. The color of her eyes was undecided, though they

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were shaded by long, dark lashes, that deepened them into hazel. 'Neath the clear olive of her cheeks gleamed a delicate tint of rose, ever flushing into crimson at the sound of one beloved name.

Now that she had gone within, the moon and stars looked coldly; but you could catch the gleam of her snowy robe in yonder richly-furnished drawing-room, as she nestled like a warmth-bringing sunbeam in the bosom of her aged father, with his gray hairs floating like waves of silver over the darkness of her brown tresses.

O, a gentle and hopeful being was she,—all light and loveliness! But new thoughts were in her heart, and wilder grew her snatches of song. More and more rose-hued the heart-leaves that went forth from her pure spirit to her childhood's friend, Constance Beaumont. All earth seemed brightened into rosy light by the sheen of *his* dark eyes; and wildly beat her heart, deeper grew the crimson on her fair cheek, as she broke the seal of his first letter. Sunny smiles were on her lips and in her eyes as she read, even to the last sentence; and then the joy-light was dimmed, for it fell mournfully upon her heart. Thus it ran:

"Ida, dearest! have you not learned ere yet to laugh at your foolish fears that *I* would change? Ah, Ida, you should know me better! Time will tell!"

"Yes, time *will* tell," murmured Ida; and the hot tears fell on her clasped hands. "But O, what mean these haunting fears, these fearful shadows, beckoning me from the yet to come?" and once more Ida turned to look at that grand picture, "Carker on the Dark Road,"—for she thought, "What a dark road *life* is!"

But soon the love-light brightened away all the dark clouds from round her heart, and, hopeful, trusting and happy, Ida Montgomery, in her snowy robes, moved like a sunbeam about the old-time halls and corridors of that noble mansion. The weeks and months passed rapidly away, brightened by the thought that she should meet him again in the spring-time.

"Ah," she murmured, "life and light will come again to bud and blossom. Back to the trees will steal their delicate green, to the flowers their perfume, and the glorious voices to stream and woodland; and back to my young heart will come its idol!"

O, what a beauty lingers round the first, pure love of a maiden's heart!

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The blue sky looks bluer, bright with the ineffable glory of the home of God. Moon and stars are brighter and holier, and wood and glen seem all

"Made musical with solemn-sounding psalms!"

Dream on, Ida! The love-light deepens in thy sunny eyes, and thy voice has caught a tone of purer inspiration. In good sooth, the dream is bright!

CHAPTER II.—THE WAKENING.

It was Christmas, joyful Christmas! The evening before had been calm and peaceful, with its words of prayer for the aged, strength for the young, and its Christ-child and Christmas-tree for the little ones. Stars gleamed over earth, minding one of the yet more glorious star,— the "star of Bethlehem,"— and the wise men who said, "We have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him!" Yes, the stars gleamed, and the moon shone, "high in the noon of night," as they shone above the humble manger, where the divine Christ-child lay sleeping,

"In the solemn midnight, centuries ago!"

Cold and clear had dawned the Christmas morning. All the day the sun had shone gayly over the flashing waves of the "Father of Waters," and through the richly-stained glass windows of the old chapel, on the green leaves and bright red berries of pine-bough and holly-branch.

And now it was the evening. A noble company were that night to assemble in the broad halls of General Montgomery, and the heiress of Oakwood was alone in her boudoir. She had just dismissed Minnette, her pretty Creole waiting-maid, and was standing before a richly-inlaid table, strewn with the gifts of the day. There were costly volumes clasped with massive gold, baskets richly wrought in silver and filigree, and jewels worth a prince's ransom. Her full and richly-developed figure was draped in a robe of many-shaded India silk, falling in heavy folds to the tiny satin slipper, richly wrought with gold and jewels. Her neck and arms were bare, save that on her left wrist glittered a heavy band of gold, clasped with a ruby; and on her snowy neck lay the massive links of the golden chain, with the miniature she always wore, because it was

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his gift. Her dark hair was folded in heavy waves round her graceful head, and was entirely without ornament. But she raised to her lips the simplest among the many gorgeous *bandeaux* lying before her, and, as she kissed it, murmured, amid her tears,

"How many a time, in *thy* years of light and life, sweet mother, my father's hand may have wreathed these pearls amid thy raven tresses, as he kissed the bright, smile-dimpled lips, now cold and still in death! Would thou couldst have stayed with us! Methinks I would have been purer and better for thy gentle teachings!" And the hot tears fell like rain over the glittering jewels.

It was a delicate spray of pearls, fastened with a diamond; and her father's hand had chosen it for her, that Christmas Day, from among the jewels of her dead mother. But she dashed the tear-drops from her eyes, and bound the pearl-wreath above her broad, fair brow, murmuring, "For *thy* sake, dearest mother!" And beautiful they looked, those snowy buds, nestling like dew-drops among the rich, dark braids; while the diamond on her brow paled before the light of those flashing eyes.

Ah! she is *almost* beautiful, the dear, sweet Ida, as once more she sits down, in the rosy light of the perfumed lamp, and draws from among the folds of her rich dress that little locket, so exquisitely wrought from the yellow African gold.

"Ah, Clarence," she murmurs, "do those brown eyes indeed look coldly on me, or is it but my fitful fancy? Why have I not heard from you to-day?—you, who should have been first, with pen at least, to wish a merry Christmas to your betrothed bride! But how foolish I am to be so anxious, when a thousand chances could have delayed the letter! I must go, for I hear the guests arriving, and my father whispered he would fain see his Ida gay to-night." And she rose to go down stairs; but, clasping her hand to her head, suddenly sat down again. "O, whence comes it," she murmured, "this sharp, sudden thrill of agony? I have felt it but once in my lifetime, and that was just before dear mother died!" And, as if convulsed by anguish, the gentle girl knelt low among the velvet cushions of her boudoir,—knelt and wept, for one brief moment, O, how bitterly! But she grew calm again ere her low-voiced prayer was over; for, in the sweet innocence of her very childishness, she had put her trust in "One who is mighty to save."

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Gently she rose, when that fierce strife was over, and, pressing fresh, dewy roses to her tear-gemmed eyes, bearing in her hand a bunch of costliest exotics, she roamed, like a beautiful spirit, down the broad oaken stair-way, and into the brilliantly-lighted hall, where the guests had already begun to assemble. Many who had before passed the gentle Ida by unnoticed wondered, that Christmas night, at her almost spiritual loveliness. Proud and glad was the old man's heart, as he gazed on his darling, and heard the blessings murmured on her fair head by young and old.

Louisiana's proudest daughters were there. Beautiful blondes, with golden tresses floating over their fair brows, like truant sunbeams, and the starry love-light gleaming and brightening in their deep-blue eyes; and glorious brunettes, too, with jewels flashing in their raven hair, and eyes black and bright,— wildly, madly bright,— like the restlessly-gleaming orbs of the sons and daughters of Egypt. There were many there that an artist would have pronounced more beautiful, but not a brow on which your eyes could rest more lovingly, not a form you could take closer to your heart, than that of gentle Ida Montgomery.

Hush!— she is singing! Breathe not, speak not, as higher on the perfumed air rises that thrilling melody! Her dreamy eyes are flashing into black, and, with the flush of inspiration on her pure brow, she seems a Pythoness evoking the shades of the past. Fuller, wilder, sweeps the glorious tide of improvisation. How the spectres of past glory are flitting before her!— and anon they vanish. Fainter, fainter, sound the dirge-notes; and the bold strain dies away like requiem-whispers. Then from out the ghost-haunted past there gleams another phantom, nobler, prouder still; and once more wild and high rises the glorious melody. Ah! do you hear it, that faint foot-fall, at the other end of the long, silent hall? Ida hears it; and, long years after, those hasty steps seemed to spurn the green turf over the graves in her heart; but they bring only joy-dreams now. A quick, glad blush suffuses cheek, brow and neck, and for one brief moment the tide of song falters; but anon it breaks forth again, in yet more thrilling harmony.

O, Clarence! did not thy fond heart thrill at the wondrous melody of that well-known voice? Ah, no! for the echoes of another and a dearer tone were lingering in his ear; and even in her hour of triumph must

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the shadow fall on the heart of Ida Montgomery; for she has bound round a ruined shrine the roses of her love. The song is over, and words of homage are breathed in her ear. Proud ones throng round her; but she hears not, heeds not. Her dark eyes are gazing, in breathless anxiety, on one noble form, standing by General Montgomery. Her ear is strained to catch the echo of that well-known voice. At last he approaches, with a smile; but, O! it is not the smile of days that were. Who that has ever loved cannot read the lightest difference in glance or tone? Slight things, indeed, doth it need to tell the proud heart that it is broken. Thus thought Ida, as Clarence whispered,

"Come with me, sweet cousin, to the conservatory; for it is long since we met, and I fain would speak to thee."

Round Ida's heart there crept a deadly weight; and her cheeks paled, and her limbs trembled. But she rose, with an effort, and accompanied her lover. And there, amid the flowers, he knelt low at her feet, and told her all — all! How he had once thought he loved her; yes, and that he loved her still, even as ever; but that 't was a calm, passionless affection, — a brother's love. That he had seen *another* one, wildly beautiful; and when he first listened to her voice, thrilled and subdued by her wondrous beauty, he had vowed to follow those sweet sounds through life; but that, even in that first moment of love, Ida's reproachful eyes had haunted him, and his cheek had paled at the memory of his vows to her. Long and fearfully had he struggled against this fatal passion; — and Ida saw the care-lines on his once smooth brow, as she looked at him, and the expression of suffering on his proud lips; — but the conflict had been vain. More and more brightly the beautiful eyes of Kate Barclay had sparkled in his dreams. More and more wildly had his soul thrilled to the intoxication of her glorious beauty. But, though she had smiled on him, and encouraged him, never yet had he spoken to her of love. "And," he concluded, "it is for you to say, Ida, whether I ever shall. God knows I would not make her miserable whom once I swore to love forever; and if this poor divided heart can add to your happiness, O, tell me, and well will I cherish you, — you, than whom there is but one dearer being to my heart on earth! Speak but the word, and never more will I gaze on the wild loveliness of Kate Barclay!"

But, ah! he knew little of woman's heart, if he thought that word

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would be spoken. No. You may blot from life the very sunlight of existence, wither every flower in the garden of her heart, and yet, though her head throbs, her brain reels with the crushing agony, — though she settle down into madness, or the fearful calmness of despair, — yet will she not sacrifice one iota of her pride, or breathe one word of supplication for the tenderness which should be freely given. Proudly flashed Ida Montgomery's dark eyes, as she replied,

"O, no! do not be uneasy on *my* account; for surely *you* have taught me it is easy to forget! Gladly will I release you from every tie; for Ida Montgomery is not one to bind an unwilling heart. May this ring of our betrothal fit well the finger of your fair Kate! I'll give you all *my* congratulations now, since henceforth we must meet only as strangers!" And she turned proudly away.

But her cold, haughty words fell crushingly on the softened heart of Clarence; and his voice was hoarse with agony, as he answered,

"O, Ida! Ida! — do not kill me with such stern, unforgiving words! Have you forgotten the sweet summer evening, long ago, when, kneeling by your dead mother's green, low grave, you vowed to love me ever with a sister's love? And round my heart the memory of that first pure love is lingering yet, though in after years we vainly thought it had grown to be a deeper idolatry. O, Ida! in no love on earth could I be happy without *your* forgiveness, *your* blessing. Will you not be my sister still? I implore you, I entreat you, by the memory of all the past, — of the many hours, sunny and sad, ere words of love had ever been spoken, when I sat by your side, as a brother, in the dimly-lighted chapel, the silent wood, or the quaint old halls of your sunny home, — Ida, Ida, be my sister still!"

And the proud girl's heart was softened; and, bending low, she pressed a sister's kiss on his pale, high brow, and murmuring "God be with you, Clarence!" she left him to his own wild dreamings.

Strange thoughts flitted through his brain, but they were more of joy than sadness; and low to himself he murmured, "It is for *her* happiness, as well as mine. She never loved me, else she could not have spoken with such cold, prideful scorn, and then have forgiven me so easily. But God bless my gentle sister! And now, Kate, for love and thee!" And so saying, he left once more the halls of Oakwood.

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But poorly had he read the pages of that wildly-loving heart. Her first haughty words were but the irresistible impulse of woman's pride; — her forgiveness was the triumph of her deep-seated religious faith over a heart already softened into tenderness by the memory of her dead mother.

Long were the hours of that weary evening to Ida Montgomery; but she would not pain her father's doting fondness, or lay open her heart-wound to the cold pity of the throng; and no foot in those proud halls paced the dance so gayly, no other voice rang out with such wild, thrilling melody. Well has it been said, "Tears *may* deceive sometimes; lamentations, often; but never, O, never that misery that flushes the cheek, kindles the eye, and bids the lip mock with sparkling words the deep and hidden woe within," — the sepulchre of the heart, where buried hopes lie sleeping!

More and more wildly flashed her dark eyes; deeper, clearer, was the melody of her voice; and the world recked not that in the midst of her gayest mirth her hand would be pressed to her flushed brow, to still its almost maddening throbbing.

But the guests are gone, and once more is Ida Montgomery alone in her boudoir. O, what a change have these few hours wrought in that fair girl! Moaning, helplessly, she sank down among the cushions of crimson velvet, which but rendered her paleness more fearfully vivid by their contrast. "O, mother!" she murmured, "would I could come to thee; for I am weary, very weary!" And then she prayed long and earnestly, till at last a sense of her bereavement seemed to come to her with renewed force; and then, with a cry that sounded more like a death-wail of some dying animal than the accents of a suffering mortal, she fell back heavily. Long that death-like trance continued, and when Minnette entered in the morning she found her mistress lying cold and still, her corpse-like paleness contrasting fearfully with the rich glow of the gorgeous silk and the jewels on her brow. But, at last, with a faint sigh, she raised the long lashes resting on her cheek, and wildly, madly bright were her eyes, as they unclosed. Her pale face crimsoned with the fever-flush, and in all the madness of delirium, she shrieked, "Home! home! O, father, take me home!"

O, ye who laugh at a broken heart, and scruple not to trifle with

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life's dearest love, come with me into that darkened room, where a stricken father is bending over all that is dear to him on earth!

O, how she shrieks in her madness! How imploringly she calls on that one beloved name! If Ida Montgomery had never been beautiful before, she was wildly, enchantingly beautiful now, with the madness in her large, dark eyes, and the fever-flush on her wasting cheek. Many a weary week and day her faithful Minnette and her fondly-loving father hung over her fever-couch; but there was no glimmer of returning reason. All was done that medical skill could avail, and now even the ghosts of Hope were almost fled, when, at last, one afternoon, she sank into a deep and peaceful sleep.

"Thank God!" murmured the old physician, as he wiped the tears from his little gray eyes, — "Thank God, if she wakes again, it will be to life!" And where before there had been but groans and prayers, there was weeping, joyful weeping, now; and in the silence the father knelt, and breathed before the throne of God words of intense joy and thanksgiving.

One, two, three hours pass, and still she sleeps. There is silence in that darkened room, and her rest is so dreamless and quiet that her father sometimes fears it is the sleep of death; and, gliding gently to her bedside, he bends low to catch the faint echo of her breathing. But the weary watch is over. Slowly unclose those mild, soft eyes, no longer wild with the brightness of delirium. The fever-flush has faded from the cheek, and in its place already has begun to steal back again the faint, delicate rose of health. A ray from the setting sun stole through the rose-hued curtains, and played over her pure brow, and among her dark tresses, like a beam of celestial light. It seemed a happy omen to the father's heart; and a glad smile broke over his watch-worn features, as that voice, dearer to him than golden melody of birds, gently murmured, "Father, I have seen heaven in a trance; but I am home again now, and O, how bright the sun shines! But I thought it was night; and O, father, at first, I had a fearful dream! I thought there were people here, and many lights, and they were trying to take Clarence away from me!" and the poor girl raised her hand to her head, as if to bring back her wandering thoughts.

O, it had been touching to see her when the fever-fit was on her,

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as she helplessly moved her hands, and seemed as one groping in the dark over broken stairs, and draw-bridges, and dim old ruins! "How deep the water is!" she would cry sometimes. "O, Clarence, do not let me sink!" And then again her feet seemed wandering over deep morasses and fearful precipices, and once more, as in the first low wail of her delirium, she would cry, "O, father, take me home!"

Sometimes, too, her visions seemed gentle and peaceful. An innocent, happy child again, she was praying at her dead mother's knee, or wandering with Clarence through green fields, bright with sunshine. But, O, if her father's heart was wild with agony as he listened to her ravings, it throbbed now with a yet deeper pang, as he saw her striving to recall memories which would take from her heart the very sunlight of existence,—memories which must too surely come!

But, hush! she speaks again.—"O, 't was a sad, mournful dream, was n't it father, dear? But, then, I seemed to fall into a sweet, quiet sleep. O, I can never tell you how bright the moon and stars were; but high, high above them all I roamed, till the ineffable glory dazzled my mortal eyes. But I *know* I saw dear mother there;—there was a crown of golden light upon her brow, and her eyes were still more purely bright than when, with her thin hand on my bowed head, she blessed me for the last time, when the angels were calling her away. I could not look, with my dim human vision, at the wondrous glory of the great white throne; but, O, it was such a beautiful country! There were ever-blooming flowers around me, and bright-winged birds were singing, and the very streamlets rippled onward with a gush of low, sweet music. But I thought you'd want me, father dear, and the ties of earthly love were strong; so home again came my willing spirit. And then I seemed in fearful pain; and, O, I can remember no more.—Clarence! Where is he? I saw him in my dream,—and why am I here, lying low and still, in the bright sunshine?"—and the fair girl strove in vain to rise. "Have I been ill, father dear? I am so weak, and there's such a strange feeling here!" and, raising her hand to her head, the poor sufferer burst into tears.

Gently the father moved to her bed-side, and, with all a mother's caressing fondness, he took the poor head to his breast, and smoothed down the rich brown tresses. Big, scalding tears rolled down his fur-

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rowed cheeks, as he murmured, — "O, Ida! my own heart's darling! God be with thee, and bless thee, dearest, — our God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb!"

Long they sat there, the father and child, — she faintly sobbing, with her head resting heavily on his breast; he murmuring blessings o'er her, while the hot tears fell like rain on her brown braids. Leave we them now, and return to Clarence Lincoln.

Glad, hopeful thoughts were busy in his heart, that Christmas night, six long weeks agone, as he galloped from Oakwood to Lincoln Grange, and during his hasty journey to Baltimore. And O, how bright with the earnest love-light was his dark hazel eye, as, after an hour or two at his hotel, he walked rapidly towards the residence of Judge Barclay, and pulled the silver-handled bell-rope at the well-known door! And beautiful was the vision that greeted his eyes, as he stood at the entrance of the brilliantly-lighted drawing-room of the Barclays'. Twilight was already deepening into evening, and silver lamps were burning in many a sconce of massive gold. Richly streamed the rosy light over gilded chairs, and hangings of silk and velvet.

Sweetly floated out the perfume of rare exotics from vases of silver and porphyry, and brighter, wilder, sweeter than all, flashed the darkling eyes of Kate Barclay. You must needs hold your breath as you gazed on her, as if you saw a dream-phantom, and were fearful lest a breath would destroy it, a motion cause it to vanish. Ah, she was enchantingly, gloriously beautiful; and you could not wonder that one glance of those eyes, one tone from those full red lips, made the warm blood thrill round the heart of Clarence Lincoln!

Her eyes and hair were of gypsy blackness; the eyes large, liquid, and lustrous, — the hair so glossy in its jetty hue that it seemed almost to emit flashes of light. It was folded in heavy braids round her classical head, and each shining wave was sprayed with diamonds, the wreath being knotted with a ruby on her high, proud brow. Her nose was straight, with a thin, flashing nostril, and her full parting lips displayed teeth so white and even that they rivalled the oriental pearl in beauty. In figure she was tall and elegantly developed, and her full, rounded proportions were displayed to excellent advantage by a closely-fitting robe of crimson satin, over which fell the gossamer folds of an over-dress

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of richly-wrought India lace; for the fair Kate was in party costume. On her full, white neck lay the massive links of a heavy pearl necklace, clasped with diamonds. Her arms and hands were glittering with jewels, and she seemed one blaze of light and beauty, from the ruby on her brow to the tiny satin slipper, skilfully wrought with gold and mother-of pearl.

For one brief moment Clarence Lincoln gazed in silent admiration on the vision of loveliness that met his enraptured sight; but a voice to whose echoes he had listened in dream-land for many a long night bade him enter. And Clarence entered, with the joy-light dancing in his heart and eyes; and, kneeling at her feet, in a burning torrent of wild, passionate words, he poured forth his chivalrous devotion, his long-hoarded love. Kate heard him calmly, not even withdrawing her small, fair hand from his passionate clasp. But when the last word was spoken, and he waited her reply with his head bowed low on her clasped hands, then, ah! then there were no soft arms stealing round his neck; no warm, moist lips pressed in rapture to his own; but proudly Kate Barclay rose, with a cold, mocking smile round her beautiful lips, and answered him.

"Really, sir knight, you 've told your story well! Conned the lesson beforehand with Miss Ida Montgomery, did n't you? I 'm sorry I can't oblige you, really; but the truth is, Mr. Lincoln, when you first came here, we heard you were engaged, and my acquaintance with you commenced in a playful wager that Ida Montgomery should lose her lover to Kate Barclay. Besides, it 's really *impossible* that I should do anything for you, for I 've been engaged these six months to Count St. Eval; and — but that 's his carriage at the door, and I hope you 'll excuse me if I leave you kneeling there, with an invitation to finish what you have to say another time."

During the whole of this bitter, mocking speech, Clarence Lincoln had knelt spell-bound, rapt in a strange, incredulous wonder, at such words from the lips of her he loved. But he rose now, and his tone was cold and proud as her own, as he answered, "Nay, Miss Barclay, I shall not need to tax your time and patience any further. Thanks for the lesson you have already taught me, and good-night."

"*Bonne nuit*," was the response; and, with the words, loud, clear and

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musical, rang the laugh of the beautiful Kate Barclay through those proud halls. But, ah! beneath that gay, mocking laugh there swelled the wail of an almost broken heart; for she had loved Clarence Lincoln as well as her proud heart *could* love any one on earth. Nay, start not, gentle reader! There are hearts in this world to whom love is nothing in comparison with wealth and power, and Kate's was one of those.

Fascinated by the title and reputed grandeur of the Count St. Eval, she had immolated at his shrine the only being she had ever loved on earth.

She had, indeed, commenced the conquest of Clarence Lincoln in a playful wager; but she had not been exposed to his rare powers of fascination without learning to linger for the tones of his musical voice, while her heart thrilled at the glance of his dark eyes. But a flush of triumph was on her brow when, leaning on St. Eval's arm, she entered the brilliantly lighted saloon of the Deucatels.

Her step was lightest in the dance, her voice gayest in the song,

> "And she, with her bright eye, seemed to be
> The star of the goodly companie."

But where was Clarence then? Sometimes sitting with his head bowed upon his clasped hands, as if in a dream of painful thoughts, and anon pacing with hurried steps the floor of his lowly room. Ah, heaven help thee now, Clarence Lincoln; for thy life-light is quenched, thy hope-star is gone out! And yet, strange inconsistency of the human heart! the eyes that haunted him were not Kate's. His was a proud heart, and with the last echo of her mocking words had died every lingering passion-throb for the beautiful Kate Barclay. But he was none the less miserable; for back to his heart had returned, with double force, his old idolatry for Ida Montgomery, as he saw in the strong light of contrast her gentleness, and truth, and purity of motive.

"O!" he exclaimed; "what an insensate, thrice-mocked fool was I, to cast from me the priceless tenderness of such a heart, and revel in this brief, bright dream of passion, for one whom — ah, I *feel* it now! — whom I have never yet loved with half the pure devotion of my early worship! But I may not ask *thee* to forgive, dear, gentle Ida! Thou couldst not understand the fleeting dream, the miserable fickleness, of this poor heart;

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and, though I might have thy *pity*, thy *love*, O, never again! O, Ida! Ida!" and the proud man bowed his head, and wept big, scalding, passionate tears, such as only man *can* weep!

And when a calm succeeded the wild storm of contending passions, it was but the fearful calmness of despair. He dared not write to Ida, for he felt that justly she would scorn him. But to linger near her unseen, unloved, was madness, misery; and, in his agony, he resolved to sail immediately for Europe, and seek, what was never yet found by the suffering, a place to forget. O, fatal resolution! for, had he gone to Oakwood then, he might have lingered near his Ida in that fearful agony, and at the first gleam of returning health he might have chased from her heart, with words of love and tenderness, the phantoms of that terrible dream, and once more clasped her in his arms as his own betrothed one. O, what after years of misery might have been spared to both!

But no, it was not thus to be; and swiftly the good ship bore him onward over the bosom of the broad Atlantic. Closely to his throbbing heart was pressed Ida's miniature, and the little sunny curl *his* hand had cut from her brown tresses, as a talisman, in the sunny boyhood days, long years agone. And yet, with that dear face pressing close against his heart, he was striving to forget! — To FORGET! There is not in all the world a task so bitter. — To bury in oblivion thoughts which were once the very sunshine of existence! Ah! yet again will the sweet waters taste of bitter, and again will the calm sea become turbulent. When we think we have succeeded in burying all the memories of the past, a look, a tone, a written word, will have power to open the grave in the heart, and forth will come a sleeping hope, a shrouded calamity, "a new Lazarus!" Thus thought Clarence Lincoln, as he stood alone on the banks of the Rhine, where once *they* had hoped to stand together.

Bivouacking with the German students, wandering in ghost-haunted ruins, or gazing in blue eyes and listening to soft voices in the halls of the nobility, still,

"Though fame and ambition were gleaming before,
He sought but a Lethe, to find but a grave;
For a presence was with him to haunt evermore,
A spell like the moon gleaming down on the wave."

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For still, 'mong the proud old ruins, with their stirring legends and haunting memories; 'mong the noble and beautiful; on the mountain-tops, or floating with the barge-men over the beautiful river, still inward on his soul streamed the mournful love-light from the dark eyes of Ida Montgomery, and forth from the desolate chambers of his heart there rose to heaven a tear-choked, wailing cry, "O, that I had been wiser!"

Ah! bid the mountain torrent stop its course, the sea its wild, tumultuous roarings; but ask not the loving heart to tear from its hallowed recesses the sacred memory of the past! The step may grow feeble, the brow furrowed, and all life's hope and light and loveliness be withered; but sometimes the memory of youthful idolatry will return to warm and brighten it, and the almost pulseless heart will beat a mournful cadence to the dirge-notes sounding from the ghost-haunted past. For the heart that has once loved can never forget!

CHAPTER III.—THE RESOLVE.

Spring, glorious, wonderful spring is once more brightening earth to Eden, and the flower-laden breeze steals pleasantly in through the open window of Ida Montgomery's boudoir. The perfume of the opening buds was round her, her pet birds were singing, and yonder far away rolled the yellow Mississippi, like a broad belt of golden light. But sadness sits on that fair brow, and tear-drops dim the sheen of those dark eyes. She has been thinking of all the past; and the phantom-halls ring again with the sound of *his* dear voice, and her cheek flushes at the well-remembered light of his radiant eyes.

She will not, cannot blame him, that, in plighting his love to her, he deceived himself; and that a deeper passion woke him from his dream, to find it but a brother's tenderness. Not one reproach does she bestow on his memory, as saddeningly, crushingly to her heart comes back the bitter truth, that to him, happy in another's love, she must be as nothing now!

> "But yet she loved him,—who can say be still
> To the strong heart that beats not at our will!"

Slowly she rose, and took from a jewelled casket his miniature and letters, which she had not dared to gaze on since that fatal night; and,

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drawing mournfully through her thin fingers a long, rich curl of his shining hair, she enclosed them in a small package, together with a sweet, gentle note, promising him her blessing, and a continuation of her sisterly love; and then sat down again to dream how desolate was the earth now, though a few months before it had seemed bright with the hues of fairy-land.

A week passed on, and it was the glorious May-day. All light and loveliness was the green leafy earth, sweet and fresh the glad spring breeze, bright and golden the spring sunshine. It was such a day as makes the life-blood throb wild and free round young, happy hearts, and brings a hope-dream even to the weary and sorrowing, minding them, by its pure brightness, of the yet more glorious loveliness of the Eden-land.

And it brought strength and hope even to the heart of Ida Montgomery. That morning she had received again the miniature and letters, with a brief note, stating that *Mr.* Lincoln had sailed for Europe six weeks before. But Ida little knew the suffering heart he had borne with him across the blue sea. She thought he had gone forth with his beautiful Kate, in the rosy light of hope and love. For a few moments she sat absorbed in a painful dream. She seemed to see him standing in glorious, sunny Italy, reading the beauty of sky and plain in the bright eyes of his fair young bride. And, as she dreamed, for one brief moment her head was bowed in agony; but the prayer was on her lips that her dead mother had murmured in the twilight long years agone, and she grew calm again. "He shall be my brother," she murmured; and, rising, she placed the sealed packet in a secret drawer of her inlaid cabinet, not trusting herself to take a last fond look on the beautiful face, so wildly, vainly dear; and, with the proud light of resolution gleaming in her dark eyes, she exclaimed, "Lie there, relics of the past! Dim links of a broken chain, lie there! and Ida Montgomery will learn to forget."

And, with that strange light still gleaming in her eyes, she drew towards her a small ebony writing-desk, and wrote — wrote wild, burning, glorious words, — words that would waken up an echo in the heart's low chambers, and kindle the slumbering fires of noble spirits with their Promethean touch. And thus — thus — in the darkness of the trial-hour,

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the wonderfully gifted poetess, Corinne Clifton, commenced her journey into *Author-land.*

The gay, glad girl of seventeen had been in these few weeks of trial merged into the deeply-thinking woman; and, with the strength of newly-acquired purpose, she wrote, diligently, wearily. The world offered homage at her shrine, and strewed her path with flowers. Perfume loaded the air around her, and yet her foot-fall sank heavily on the roses. Proud hearts thrilled at her eloquent prose, and her wild, passionate, soul-full poetry, — literally burning with the pent-up fire of emotions her strong will had forbidden to gush forth in other channels.

Yes, they read and marvelled, — laughed when her lay was mirthful, and wept when it was sad. But *they* — the cold, proud world — recked not that the heart-flowers they delighted to gather rose fresh and green from a soil ploughed and furrowed by the share of torture, and erewhile the bed of a stream of sorrow, whose waves were cold, black and bitter, and almost as deep as the tide of death. They recked not that in Ida's heart a spring of unquiet waters had arisen, and ever and anon its lava-tide flowed once again over the desolated heart, and turned once more to bitterness the fresh-springing fountains. O, is it not too often thus, when,

> "Christians, at your cross of hope
> A hopeless hand is clinging;
> Poets, from a maddened brain,
> Is poured the deathless singing!"

O, too many a poor heart is forced, like a caged bird, to pour forth golden melodies for other ears, when through its own desolate chambers they echo like dirge-notes!

Come nearer, my Gertrude, my spirit-sister. Once more kiss me gently, and look on me with the tears trembling in thy brown eyes, and help me thank our Father for the warm, bright heart-sunshine that is still trembling round *our* young lives!

But the restless ghosts were still haunting the deep chambers of Ida's heart, when she thought she had learned to *forget forever*, — to look on Clarence Lincoln as a brother. And so, under her assumed name, for two long years she wrote on, binding fresh laurels round her brow, with the unquiet light still gleaming in her deep eyes. Proud men knelt at the feet of her, the gifted one, and many a noble hand would fain have

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braided her dark locks with diamonds. But to all she wore the same proud brow, the same calm smile, seldom brightened into tenderness, save when alone with her old father. Then she would nestle in his bosom, as of old, and wear the smile, radiant with love-light, that Clarence used to say was stolen from the angels. But they were wrong who said Ida Montgomery's heart was cold or hard. True, she had suffered, bitterly, deeply, and it had made her shrink within herself, and hide from the busy, bustling, too often heartless world, her warm, quick-gushing sympathies.

But the children loved her, and their eyes kindled at her coming. The deer roamed by her undisturbed, and the forest-birds ruffled not their plumage at her pensive foot-fall. Growing daily more pure, more beautiful, more heavenly, she lived, moved and brightened, in a world of her own. She roamed through the dim old woods, listening to the fairy-whispers, and dreaming of the good, and true, and beautiful; and when the bell sounded for vespers, in the old church-tower, she would draw the rich drapery from before her mother's portrait, and, with those prayerful eyes beaming on her, as if from Paradise, she would murmur orisons. Ay, and her life was pure, and true, and happy. The *one* bright star-hope had been crushed, but other loves grew and brightened in her heart. Angels watched over her, and she slept like the blessed.

CHAPTER IV.—SECOND LOVE.

Brightly glinted the October sunshine over the blue sea. Gayly sang the birds; and swiftly the good ship bore Ida Montgomery onward, towards the New York home of her friend Constance Beaumont. On the schooner's deck Ida sat, reading. The fresh sea-breeze had blown back the brown tresses from her brow, and ever and anon, looking up from her book, she would gaze forth, with her free, large eye, into the free, large world. Occasionally she encountered the glance — earnest, yet respectful — of a handsome young gentleman, apparently about twenty-five years old. His eyes were a clear deep blue, large and bright. Rather light-brown hair lay in rich masses of curls on his broad, smooth forehead, and round his expressive mouth played a frank, cheerful smile. His face was one of those noble and open ones, that win your

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confidence at a single glance. The air of high breeding and intellectual refinement that surrounded him had attracted Ida's attention, and more and more earnest and respectful grew his glances of admiration.

"O," he sighed, "if 't would only storm or blow! Anything, that I might hear, were it but two words, from those sweet lips!" And, as if the storm-spirit had been listening to his prayer, the sky about the sun suddenly grew red and lurid, and over the great deep hung that fearful calmness, so hushed and death-like, the harbinger oft-times of a storm that is strong to strew the sea with wrecks, and fill sunny homes with wailing. Lower and lower sank the mercury in the barometer, and more and more livid grew the storm-clouds. At last, down it came! O, what a fearful blast! How the ship tossed and plunged, like a living thing struggling for existence! Wild was the war in heaven, as the billows chased each other madly onward; and ever, as the blast swept by, it bore with it black rain-clouds, wildly weeping, as if over the strong sea were poured the big, bursting tears of an earthly despair. But wilder, higher, bitterer, more frantic than all, uprose the wail of the storm-driven human beings. Strange voices blent in that unearthly cry; — the young and old, the stern and the beautiful, the rich and poor, all drawing nearer and nearer to each other, brought to a level and united by the strong tie of a common peril.

Only two were calm. Apart from the others stood Ida Montgomery, looking, in her snowy robes, like some beautiful spirit of the storm, on which she was gazing with kindling eyes; and near her stood the young man, Frederick Livingstone, attracted by an irresistible admiration of that fair young girl, so brave and dauntless in the fearful strife. As he drew near her, he heard her murmuring, in a voice low and musical as the southern breeze when it sighs through flower-laden forests, — murmuring,

"'He bowed the heavens, also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion around about him was dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds past, hail-stones and coals of fire. But he sent from above; he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me; for they were too strong for me.'"

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And almost involuntarily, as the young man listened, he responded: "'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen!'"

And the echo of those solemn words, so strangely appropriate to the wild war of elements, died away; and again there was silence between those two, so strangely met. But a great peril removes all disguise, and puts away from the mind the conventional restraints and strictures of society. And already they were friends, who, three hours before, had never met; but who were destined to bear away an impress from that wondrous scene in the tempest's gloom, with the frowning sky above them, and the fierce, angry-lashing waves beneath, which should never be forgotten, — not in a long lapse of years, not in time, — no, not even in eternity!

Wilder, madder grew the storm; but still he stood, that brave man, supporting Ida's trembling form, and gazing into her clear, undaunted eyes, feeling, even then and there, with death standing before him, and the wild, mad storm dashing around, a sudden thrill of joy that he never before experienced, as he felt the gentle beating of her heart against his side, and strove to still the maddening throbbing of his own, which whispered that even then and there it would be bliss to die, so that they might die together. Wildly swept the storm, and the good ship groaned like a living thing, and reeled and plunged about over the mountain billows; but still the stout oak withstood the shock; and suddenly a calm came, — the wild storm died away. It was as if a voice from heaven had spoken to the raging sea those olden, glorious words, "Peace, be still!"

Yes, the storm ceased, and there was little sleep, but gladness, and prayer, and many tears, on board the good ship Petrel. They had been saved from a dreadful death, and men, stout men, who had never prayed before, knelt down in thankfulness. All through the long hours of that destiny-marked night Frederick Livingstone lingered by Ida's side. Their peril had made them friends. Ida could not easily close again her heart from one against whose side it had beaten in the tempest, — from one whose protecting arm had, perchance, saved her life. He told her of his sunny home in sweet New England; of its roses, and honeysuckles, and whispering trees; of the widowed mother who prayed for him there, and the gentle, beautiful sisters who loved and watched for him; and

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then of the hopes and fears of his college life; of the hours when his heart had trembled to the call from heaven; when his soul had thrilled to the Pentecost breathing of the glorious spirit; and of the winter previous to his ordination, which he was now going to spend in New York, with the rector of beautiful Trinity.

And, as he spoke, the home of Constance Beaumont brightened in its golden drapery to Ida's spirit gaze.

And she, too, with a confidence most unusual to her proud spirit, told him, in gentle, music-breathing words, the heart-history of all her past life. Of her aged father's earnest love; of her mother's Madonna eyes, and green, low grave; and, more than all, of her heart's early love-dream, — the trial, the bitter struggle, and her peace and freedom now.

And as Frederick listened, he murmured to himself, "Thank God, she is still free!" with a thrill of new life and hope quivering through his heart. There are single hours that reveal our very hearts, and do the work of years, — hours that shine out in all our after lives, as landmarks on the stream of time, — and such hours those two felt that they had passed, when next day they parted at the door of Colonel Beaumont's stately mansion, with a promise soon to meet again.

General Montgomery and Colonel Beaumont had fought side by side in the war of the Revolution, and their beautiful daughters had been friends from earliest childhood. And yet seldom more unlike were two fair creatures just blushing into womanhood.

Ida was proud-spirited, firm and self-relying; but Constance seemed one on whom the care-blast could never rudely blow, — all love and trust and gentleness. Blue were her eyes as the sky in the softest nights of midsummer, with rosy lips and cheeks, combining the hues of a summer sunset. She was all light and gladness, like a sunbeam personified, and yet not too gay either; for, at the least shade of sadness on a brow beloved, her blue eyes would swim in tears. Her voice — but it was the sweetest music out of heaven! And now she stood in her luxuriously furnished room, alternately teasing and caressing her darling Ida, who was preparing to attend with Frederick her first party in New York.

It is Christmas again, for on swift wings the weeks have glided by since that parting in October.

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Ida Montgomery is now the betrothed bride of the handsome student, Frederick Livingstone. Many opportunities have been hers for learning the true nobility of his character, for growing to reverence his genius, and admire and esteem him beyond any one she had ever met before. True, her heart thrills not with the passion-dream of youth; but that, she feels, can never more return. Frederick knows all, and loves her wildly, tenderly; and in her earnest heart she feels that, hand in hand with him, she can traverse happily the path of life, and go, humbly trusting and rejoicing, home to heaven at last. She is simply robed in white, with the same delicate spray of pearls in her brown braids she had worn that fatal Christmas night, three years before. Round her neck lie the golden links of *another* chain, smaller and more exquisitely wrought; and, depending from it hangs a small locket set with brilliants, the gift of Frederick Livingstone; and as she gazes on the features mirrored there, a soft, sweet smile plays round her parted lips.

And yet, she is not the Ida of three years ago! Purer and more spiritual is her beauty, with less of earth in it than heaven; and Frederick gazes on her fondly and proudly, as he leads her into the brilliantly-lighted drawing-room of the Cliftons. So fresh, so new, and gifted with that rare grace which is only the heritage of the fair daughters of the sunny south, she is at once the star of the evening.

At last she consented to sing; and, half listlessly sweeping her fingers over the keys as a prelude, she commenced "Ben Bolt," that sweetest of sweet songs. Just as she was commencing the music, a stranger entered, and seemed to gaze enchanted on her wondrous beauty. There was something (for it was none other than Clarence Lincoln), something in those large, lustrous, unfathomable eyes, that reminded him of Ida Montgomery. "But no," he thought, "my poor Ida was not beautiful; and this glorious being is enchantingly lovely!" Then he heard a whisper in the room, that it was the wonderfully-gifted authoress, Corinne Clifton; and he murmured to himself, "Ah, she is good and gifted! I knew it when her golden melodies came to me in Germany, far across the blue sea."

But the prelude was over, and, with the first, faint echo of her voice, his doubts vanished, and, half breathless, he sank upon a chair, whisper-

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ing "Ida!" And O, how sadly his heart beat time to those sweet words,

"There is change in the things that I love, Ben Bolt;
There is change from the old to the new;
But I feel in the chords of my spirit the truth,
There never was *change* in you!"

But the song ceased; and then another and another succeeded in the same voice of low, bird-like melody; and Clarence sat entranced, spell-bound. At last Ida rose from the piano, and leaned once more on the arm of Frederick Livingstone. But, ah! none knew the sudden thrill of agony that shot through her frame, or why the blush brightened so painfully on her pale cheek, as her eyes met those of Clarence Lincoln. He had caught from those around him the echoed whisper, that the tall, handsome man, on whose arm she leaned, was her betrothed; and the calmness and martyr-like resolution with which he advanced to meet her was wonderful even to himself. Nor did Ida's voice falter as she spoke low words of welcome, and introduced her *brother* (O, what a mockery there was in the word!) to her betrothed.

She learned soon that Clarence had never married. But he said, for the past two years, he had been playing the critic on blue-eyed German beauty; and that he should start next morning for Lincoln Grange, and in another month sail again for Germany. Eagerly Frederick Livingstone watched Ida's countenance as he spoke; but there was no emotion visible in those calm features, for she had schooled her spirit well. And thus, with a cold good-by, again they parted, — Clarence Lincoln and the idol of his worship!

But, O! who shall say the agony that thrilled poor Ida's soul through the long, prayerful watches of that weary night? She had seen Clarence again, and he was free! O, how the mad, wild love of girlhood thrilled through her heart; and then, the next moment, she remembered it was sin! She thought that Clarence loved her not, and she — O, her own heart was pledged to one so good and noble, and their marriage had been fixed for her own birth-day, the bright and beautiful first of May!

She would be twenty then. And O, how much of earthly misery had been comprised in that short life of her, so young, so gifted! She shuddered as she thought of it. And all that night the lava-tide rushed

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madly through her frame, and swelled the delicate veins almost to bursting.

In the morning, when Constance entered, she found her kneeling low, with her head half buried in the velvet counterpane; the rich robe floating round her like a cloud, and her long lashes heavy with the unshed tears. She was sleeping sweetly; and when at last she woke, 't was from a pure dream of her dead mother; and her heart was strong, and more than ever Frederick Livingstone blessed her for her pure spirit, her holy tenderness, and heart sympathy in all his glorious dreamings.

Brightly and beautifully dawned the first of May, and in her own sweet home was she, the dear, gentle Ida! Once more, with the bright sunshine resting like a glory-cloud on her pure brow, she drew the curtain from before her mother's picture, and knelt there for the last time *as Ida Montgomery*, to implore strength from heaven, and a blessing on the vows she was that day to pronounce.

And they were married. Married in the dear old chapel, the holy-land of Ida's childish fancy. And General Montgomery gave away the bride, with a smile on his lip and a tear in his eye. Yes, and there were tears in Ida's eyes, too, as she caught through the trees the last glimpse of Oakwood on that sweet morning of May; but Frederick's fond arm was round her waist, his warm lips kissed them all away. And then they were to return in the autumn, for Frederick was to be rector of the parish of Oakwood; his voice was to resound in the dear old chapel.

And Ida was calmly, sweetly happy. Happy in his love, in the God-created world, and in all the bright and beautiful things which surrounded her. If for one moment the dreamings of her early love had intruded like phantoms on that festival morning, she had prayed for grace and strength to forget; and she had not prayed in vain, for Frederick Livingstone was dearer than life to her young heart.

Gently were the fond hands of his aged mother laid in blessing on her bowed head; and, as she nestled in those folding arms, Ida felt that her haunting longing for a mother's love was realized at last. Sweet, too, was the low-voiced welcome of his beautiful sisters; and happily the summer months glided by, till, in the russet autumn, the halls of Oakwood resounded once more with Ida's bird-like voice. O, how swiftly and brightly the months glided by! Blessed by her father's love, her

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husband's caressing tenderness, Ida's hours floated onward to the music of silver chimes; for her heart was too pure, too deeply religious, ever to evoke the phantoms of the past. But there is little to record in the quiet stillness of a good man's every-day life, and we will leave them for a while to each other, and their own heaven-born happiness.

Once more it is the beautiful first of May! Two years from Ida Montgomery's marriage. O, how hot this sultry city air is! and that pet canary seems to pause in his song, and pant for breath. Ah, gentle reader, you with the sunny eyes, and pure, pale brow, do you not smell the green fields and opening cowslips far away? Come away, then, once again, to sunny Oakwood.

There, in yonder pleasant chamber, I catch a gleam of Ida's snow-white robe. Ah! your foot-fall is light always, *ma belle*, — but tread yet more softly now, for it is the chamber of *Death!* On the still air floats a clear, flute-like melody, — Ida is singing! Listen a moment, and you will catch the echo of her song. It is a favorite hymn of Frederick's; and his sweet-voiced wife is chanting it, with his dying head resting on her faithful breast:

"I 'm weary of staying! — O, when shall I rest,
In that fair promised land, of the good and the blest,
Where sin shall no longer her blandishments shed,
And tears and temptations forever are fled!"

"Yes, weary, Ida, of sin and earth, but *never of you*, darling!" and his dim eyes brightened with the same old love-gleam. "I sometimes long still to linger by your side; but my Saviour calls, and I must go! Kiss me once — more — sweet — wife!" and, her warm lips pressed to his, and his head resting closer, closer on her breast, the purified spirit of Frederick Livingstone passed from earth to heaven.

For many months Ida was inconsolable in her grief; but she learned, at last, to think of him calmly, as gone before her to the Eden-land. Time blunts the edge of all our sorrows, as months and years roll on, and sometimes makes the green grass grow over the graves in our hearts, while at their feet a white cross rises, with the inscription "Pray for me!"

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CHAPTER V.—THE DREAM RETURNED.

It was the hazy and beauty-fraught Indian-summer. The birds were singing still, and gay autumn-flowers were blooming around, as Ida Livingstone wandered alone 'neath the shades of Oakwood, for Frederick had been sleeping 'neath the valley-sod for eighteen weary months. Her dress of deep black suited well her strange, spiritual beauty; and, roaming slowly along under the tall shade-trees, there was such a harmony between her graceful figure and the rich, quiet landscape, you might have deemed her a part of its rare loveliness. But, as she wandered slowly onward, her thoughts were busy with the phantoms of the past. She thought of all its happy months and days, of her husband's earnest love, and the time — perhaps far away, perhaps very soon to come — when she should be folded to his heart again, in heaven!

Then her thoughts wandered further away; backward to her dead mother's farewell blessing, and then, for almost the first time since her bridal morning, she mused long and earnestly on *him*, who, standing with her beside that mother's grave, had vowed in life and death to be hers only. But, hark! was not that the tramp of a swift courser? Ida raised her eyes, and low on the grass-plot at her feet knelt Clarence Lincoln! Of his early love he spoke; of his short, mad dream of passion for another, and its bitter punishment; of the long years since of misery and loneliness; of his bitter agony when he dreamed of her, his own Ida, as the wife of another; and then of his wild heart-thrill, when he heard that she was once again free!

More and more he said, words of passionate adoration; and the spell of the old love was warm and fresh around Ida's heart, and she could not turn away; and once more, as in the old, old time, Clarence felt her warm, white arms twined around his neck, her warm lips pressed to his, and heard that voice, that had sounded in the dreams of many a year, murmur, "Thine only!"

And then there was another wedding in the old chapel, and wildly happy were these long-tried, long-suffering hearts!

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It was winter, and Clarence Lincoln sat alone in his hotel at Baltimore, whither he had come to plead the cause of the oppressed, in the might of his bold, unshrinking eloquence. He was sitting buried in deep, earnest thought, when suddenly the door opened, and low at his feet knelt a beautiful woman. Could it be? Yes, it was Kate Barclay, radiant with jewels, and still beautiful, though time and grief had dimmed the light of her proud eyes, and left their lines in her fair features.

Covering his hands with passionate kisses, she spoke of all her early love, her agony at their parting, and how she had waited ever since, in the hope he would return. O, how wildly she pleaded, that proud, bad woman, for the love of the olden days! But he left her kneeling there, in the strong light, that strangely cold man, and went from the room. But he soon returned again, with a being of spiritual loveliness leaning on his arm, and, while Kate looked on in wild amazement, he murmured, in a voice all musical with tenderness, "Ida, sweet wife, you shall tell Kate Barclay whether I dare love her!"

One picture more of Oakwood, gentle reader! It is May-day once again! The third that has dawned on Ida Lincoln, and her twenty-sixth birth-day. There sits the dear old father; but white, chubby arms, are around his neck; dark, childish eyes are gazing into his; and he speaks merrily,—"Ah, Freddy, little one, *you* must be my sunbeam now; for my pet birdie has flown away, to nestle in another one's bosom." And there too are Clarence and Ida, even more beautiful than when we first gazed on them; for the bright joy-light is dancing in both their eyes, as the proud husband weaves fresh roses in his young wife's hair, and then draws her blushing and smiling to his bosom. Ah, the sun shines bright on Oakwood now, and with this page of light and joy we will close our often changing life-history, and look our last on two hearts that lived and loved, but had well-nigh broken!

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THE RECORDING ANGEL.

BY GEORGE S. BURLEIGH.

Nor in darkness and aloof,
O'er the high and jagged roof,
Where the thunder-courser's hoof
  Tramples from the solid flint
  Lightning, with its hurried dint,
  Till the earth glares in the glint;

Nor amid their fiery camp,
Who aloft, with silent tramp,
Bear the sun's eternal lamp,
  Earth's Recording Angel stands,
  Giant-limbed and large of hands,
  With a scroll might veil the lands;

Nor with pen from seraph clipt,
Or like that with which, fire-tipt,
Writeth God his stellar script;
  He records the deeds of men,
  Which some awful where and when
  Shall reveal to them again.

Silently and very still,
Like the shadow of the ill
Clinging to an earthly will;

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Like the sunshine of the good
Flowing from a holy mood,
As if flow it must and should,

Comes the record which he keeps;
Shining down the starry steeps,
Frowning from the nether deeps;
Crowding — with what fruits they win
From the wildest life within —
Boughs of good and vines of sin.

In the failing heart and limb,
In the eye debased and dim,
On the wrung brow, scowled and grim,
On the knotted cheek of care,
And the wan lip of despair,
Stands the erring fore-life bare.

In the mild, love-speaking eye,
Deep and crystal as the sky,
In the clear cheek's ruddy dye,
And the curvéd lips, which throw,
From their many-shafted bow,
Only kind words, soft and low;

All the hallowed past revives, —
Honey, stored in many hives
By the deeds of gentle lives.
In your heart, and soul, and brain,
Aim, Endeavor, Loss and Gain, —
Viewless as a joy or pain, —

Still before that Angel-eye
Pass, revealed in order, by,
And pronounce their history.

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Do ye count the tale untold,
Which the weirds of Silence hold
By their potents manifold?

Even now her thin lips flutter,
And we hear the troubled mutter
Of the secrets which they utter.
Will ye think that God delays,
If no lightning-signal blaze
To reveal your evil ways?

While ye dream your impious hope,
Lo! your spirits' dungeons ope,
And the eyeless Passions grope
Wormlike base, and blindly crawl
Down your hard cheeks' painted wall,
Till their slime-track writes them all.

Barter's Alchemist, whose lore
Aims to heap wealth more and more,
How it chills thy blood to ore,
Till thy thick heart-pulses go
With a dull metallic flow,
Never stirred by love or woe!

On thy gnarled and sallow face
All the coin has left its trace,
Eagle's beak and talons base!
Good man, shrinking from the praise
Of thy deeds, in silent ways,
Through thy very blush it plays.

Creep and cringe, thou coward soul,
In the dark earth, like a mole!
Blinded soon thou 'lt quit thy hole,

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And in day, unconscious, thrust
Thy poor body, vile with dust,
Naked to a scorn that's just.

Strut in gold, thou son of shame,
Hiding from a just defame!
Through thy thick gold leaks the blame.
Wearied Minstrel, who, alone,
In the loud world's iron drone,
Sing'st thy musical undertone;

Sing not less for all the noise
That o'ertops thy silver voice,
But in secret thought rejoice:
All thy after-steps shall be
To a grand, high harmony,
Evermore bewraying thee.

Not a tone of thine, which cost
Many a pang to feel it tost
On the rude roar, shall be lost;
Myriad hearts will catch the tune,
And obey thee, late or soon,—
Tide-waves to thy waxing moon!

And though none but thine were blest,
All its power should stand confest
In thy large life's busy rest.
Stars which have no burning ray
Govern suns which rule the day,
And we know their unseen way.

Ne'er a flower was vainly fair,
Never on the desert air
Spent its fragrance anywhere.
Ye who live to love and toil
On a verdant valley's soil,
Sacred from the world's turmoil;

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When your wealth of clustered grapes,
Lintels of the market drapes
With luxurious hues and shapes,
  Wisdom's heart shall know as well
  All the warm nooks of your dell
  As if these had tongues to tell.

Purple, red, and pearly white,
Bursting-full of mellow light
And the starlit dews of night,—
  Charming babblers, mute and sweet,—
  Every one some secret meet,
  Of your still life, shall repeat.

Heaven and earth, anear and far,
From the rose-bud to the star,
By a law that cannot jar,
  Sphere their lives, and render well,
  For the grains their orbs that swell
  Strict word and immutable.

Every where and every when,
In the world of things and men,
Stands the Angel of the Pen,
  Undeceived by lying lips;
  From his eye no cunning slips,
  'T is a sun without eclipse.

Every word and thought and look,
Trembling from its cloven nook,
Lights upon his Doomsday book
  In divine daguerreotype;
  And pursuing boon or stripe
  Seals the page when fate is ripe.

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HERBERT GRAYSON.

BY HENRY BLANCHARD.

CHAPTER I.

O, Life! O, Death! in what close company ye walk! A breath, a sigh, a smile, a word,—this is life; and then down the stream of time, in its earthly barge, the human soul has floated, has launched out on to the dark sea of death, in that bark whose prow is Faith, and whose helm is Hope!

The young and beautiful had died, the good and gay had passed away; for one more pilgrim had stood on the shores of time, listening for a few brief moments to the strange music of the waves of eternity, ere she left the shore. And, to the living, life's sandy plain stretched before him, while the horizon was shrouded in funereal clouds; and from the desert waste, to his vision, no flower of hope was blooming, nor spring of joy was gushing. But lonely and dejected sat Herbert Grayson, beside the bed of the dead Lucy Crittenden. Silent like the grave was the room; silent like futurity was the dead; silent like the ocean from which the storm has passed was the living.

It was but a simple room in which thus were the living and the dead; and the history it told was but a simple one, for it was common. Nothing strange, nothing awful; but, alas! all it told was grief.

Upon the bed lay the form of one who, in life, had been the light of the household, the gentle spirit of goodness, and the idol of domestic affection. Beside it was he who had loved her, and to whom she had been the guardian angel and the guiding-star of being.

Herbert Grayson sat with his face buried in his hands, as if grief had quite petrified him. And, as he sat, he thought how bright and beautiful

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life had seemed only a few short months ago; and now, how desolate, how cheerless, the future looked!

A single lamp burned dimly on the mantel-piece, and its flame but faintly illumined the room; for the shadows fell darkly in the distant corners, and the dusky color of all the furniture contrasted gloomily with the whiteness of the bed and the pallor of the dead.

At length the young man, weary of his sitting position, rose from his seat, and walked across the floor. No sounding foot-fall awoke the sleeping echoes, for his step was carefully light, as though it were possible to disturb the dead. Behind him lay the pale girl, whose finite being here was ended, and, perchance, whose spirit now was roaming through the space so illimitable above him. The stars, as they shone in heaven, seemed none the less brilliant, albeit *she* was gone; and he almost hated them as so silently and so beautifully they gleamed and sparkled above. Then he drew back the curtain, as if he were envious that the stars might gaze in upon her face; and when thus he had done, he clasped his hands behind him, bent his head upon his breast, and so walked across the room again.

So, to the living, the night passed, — all quiet, all still, save the iron melody of the bells, as they told the hours; but to the dead there could be no more night. Again he seated himself by the bed-side, and, as he withdrew the covering linen, he gazed upon the face of Lucy Crittenden. So fair, so beautiful it was! Ah! it was not strange death should have chosen her. But the pale, cold face looked not back on Herbert Grayson. The closed eyes would open not again for him. The compressed lips would smile never more on him, the lonely!

He looked long and earnestly. His very soul, in that gaze, seemed as if it would pass from him to her. His sight grew very dim with blinding tears. Then a thought came suddenly to him, and he rose up, and approached a little box that lay upon a table. This he opened, and from it drew forth a letter, addressed to him. He held it before him a moment as he read his name; and then, covering it with kisses ere he did so, he broke the seal. The faint light of the room prevented him from reading it where he stood; therefore he moved to the mantel-piece, and stood leaning against it. And, as he read, grief touched the springs of sorrow once again, and the fast-rolling tears fell silently. As he read,

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love's flood filled his heart, till it seemed bursting. As he read, a new star in the sky of the future shot into brilliant existence; — grief for death, love for the lost one, hope, bright dreams for the future. These were the words he read at the close of that epistle, whose every letter, word, line, was sculptured upon his heart:

"And now let me finish. You have loved me, I know; and by that love I charge you to remember what I have written. Had I lived, love should have been the steady lamp that, in darkest or brightest hours, should have burned along your way. Love should have been the helper, the co-worker of life. Love should have shed over your path the soft light of the stars, where at most times the dazzling sunlight would fall. But love, dearest, with man, is only the gentle guardian angel of life, — not the end. It is the soothing and consoling spirit, — not the prize to be gained. It is the ever-hoping monitor, that encourages, that urges forward toward something higher, and greater, and better, than it on this earth can be. Look forward, then, Herbert! — look not back! I feel that it is not my love for you which says 'You are noble, you are worthy to be great;' for I feel truly that you *are* worthy. Set up, set up an ideal, then, — an ideal of goodness, and greatness, and worth, — an ideal, though it be distant, to reach which every effort in life shall be made, — an ideal higher, grander, and more god-like, than man's selfish, ambitious aspirations. You have talents; — waste them not. The world is an arena into which you may boldly enter to battle for the right, to struggle against injustice, to hurl oppression from its seat, to roughly resist the wrong. Life, with such an object, is life indeed; it is man's life; it is the path for the great to tread!"

And when he had done, the dead that lay before him was no longer dead; for she was a spirit that, having swept the strong chords of his heart, they would ever after echo forth the noble strain she sang. His lip quivered, his nostril distended, as the storm of great thoughts whirled within him.

Dead no longer was Lucy Crittenden, although the fairy form that, breathing with health and life, they had so called, was fading like the autumn's flowers; although the roseate lips, that in life were wreathed

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with smiles, were pale and contracted now; although the eye, so earnest in its beauty, was deeply sunken; — still, still she lived, she breathed in him whom, living, she had loved!

Tell me not the dead *are* dead! They live in them they leave behind. They actuate those that remain, by their spirits, by their precepts, by their memories. Fade, fade, earthly flower! Wither, wither, beautiful blossom! But live, O, live, spirit of truth, of hope, of greatness!

And now there came a calm, as he looked in his heart and saw there shrined within its holiest recess the idol of his youth, an image of his love, placed upon the altar of his hopes, cloistered from others' gaze, and whom he alone might worship. In that hour — that silent, death-night hour — there came to him new dreams, new hopes, new resolutions. And the past fled from the present like a beautiful phantom, and the future opened to his gaze like a dazzling vision.

Weeks afterwards, Herbert Grayson went forth into the world. He had known little of its sternest ill, save by theory, not experience. He had the scholar's knowledge, not the worldling's acquaintance. His was a fresh heart, and full of high impulses and noble emotions, while his mind was ever busy in planning executions of his heart's desires. He had singular advantages of observing and of rising, inasmuch as he had parents, wealthy and influential, who doted upon him. His was a position of ease, sustained without effort of his; but from this ignoble level he could rise higher and higher, by his own ability and energy. Therefore he launched out on to the turbulent ocean of politics, that sea so colored by the green of jealousy, and from which there rise so many rocks to wreck the political mariner. He espoused the cause of the masses; and, as the good of his race was what he sought, he rose more rapidly than the only selfish do. There would come times, however, when he grew sick at heart, and, brave as he was, he almost quailed before his herculean task. Reform, reform was what he had most at heart; and the political party to which he had attached himself was a fit subject for the knife and scalpel of the reformer. Often were his purest motives slandered by the opposing party, and vile reproaches, such as are beneath the dignity of men truly men to utter, were heaped upon his head.

Ah! in such a time did he not need to seclude himself from the world,

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and seek pure companionship with that spirit within, who alone could revivify his better nature, and rekindle his holier ambition? Alas! he was too much an idealist to tear up at first the fruits of old evil. Wrong did so walk about in the mask of right, that, at first, he did not recognize it. Injustice was so robed in glittering habiliments, that they dazzled his eyes to look upon them; and vice so often simulated virtue, that the theorist was deceived.

Then the veil fell away, through whose deceiving texture he had looked upon the world, and he saw it as it is. That is to say, he saw that there was great wrong, and yet some good; much injustice, and yet some equity; hecatombs of vice, and yet temples of virtue. He saw that wealth crushed and trampled on poverty. He saw that poverty was that evil in whose darkness vice found birth. He saw that millions must toil that the units may enjoy. He saw that religion was the actor's mask and robe by which the hypocrite might play his part. And then there came a night when again he read the written letter of her who, with a beautiful faith, he fervently believed hovered over him, that he might see if one word — one little word — had been effaced from the tablets of his memory by the chisel of sharp experience. And a renewed strength came to the heart of the worker, as thus he drew inspiration from the spirit of love and truth within him; and, clad again in the mail of dauntless resolution, he could go forth to meet the stern onset of evil.

Herbert Grayson was elected to Congress. The idealist now knew that he was about entering a field where his influence would be great. With wealth at his command, one of his cherished projects was to neutralize its power. With his great wishes for the amelioration of the condition of the many, he resolved to battle ever, by word and deed, against the centralization of wealth in the hands of the few. With his earnest desires for the freedom of all, he swore to oppose the consolidation of power in the federal government, and in the few hands; but to advocate the principle of spreading the executors of the laws among the people, by the people's own election.

How often he thought of her, ere the time came round to take his seat, who had so early died! How he recalled the sweet face that had worn none but sunny smiles for him, and whose love had been the prize of his youth! How he did remember the perishing of his old hopes and the

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spring-time of the new; and then he thought, too, how the clouds of despair had vanished in that storm of grief that once had quite mastered him.

And then he laid the flower-wreaths of his success in the present upon the altar of his ambition, beside which the vestal-fires of his high resolves the spirit of his love kept burning. He reviewed the objects of his life for which he lived. They were these: to crush the power of wealth; to raise the lowly to the condition of those above them; to keep untouched the separate sovereignty of the several states; to check the growth of slavery, by wise legislation, not fanatical agitation; to abolish capital punishment, and to extend the cause of education and temperance. These, these were his noble aims, to which all the powers of his mind were given.

He took his seat in Congress, and life, like a field of wheat in which the chaff abounded, ready for the reaper's hand, spread before him. But there came a time when within his heart duty struggled terribly with policy. It was one of those subjects which, act upon it as he might, was sure to make for him enemies.

He thought long and well. He looked not alone to the present, but to the wider realm of future; and, having so thought, so gazed, he decided. Then a bitter storm of reproach fell upon his head, like the tempest's blast; but, firm in his own trueness of purpose, dignified in the rectitude of his motives, he let the gale blow on.

He had not staked his reputation without having well considered; and now, albeit in that present moment he felt he was politically wrecked, still his hoping heart did not cease to believe that truth — truth that is sublimely great — would be yet the victor. The two years of his term were passing. He had defended, through the press and by his oratory, his course in Congress; but opposition to him ran high, and the ambitious, the selfish leaders of his party, looked coldly upon him. All dark, all cloudy, was it in the horizon of events; but he did not shrink from the consequences of his action, because he had strong faith in the virtue of men. But the sting that the just so often receive came to him. He was not nominated for reëlection.

He felt the blow keenly; for a while it drew an ominous dark curtain across the future, and for a brief time his heart failed him. But not long it was. O, not long did the night seem hung in black; not long did his

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hopes bow their heads, because within him again spoke the spirit of truth and love, urging, invigorating, inciting to greater efforts.

The heavy, oppressive air of injustice that pressed upon him Hope breathed away, and above it, as he looked, he saw the bright, the glorious sun of truth shining as radiantly as of old! But there came a heart-sickness to him now, when he longed for his home, the home of his youth again. There came a deep and earnest yearning for a little quiet; and so the strong worker, the vision dreamer, the wronged patriot, sought the shades of his early home.

CHAPTER II.

Once more, then, Herbert Grayson slept beneath his ancestral roof, from which he had been so long absent, so long missed. Years, in the interval, had silently glided by, and the youth of twenty had become the experienced man of thirty. And yet a long succession of years, it was to be hoped, lengthened beyond the present maturity of manhood, in which he might more and more work as became a man.

The past, which was real, lay behind him, and he could see in memory's mirror the cypress that shaded the grave of his youthful hopes; and there, too, he could see the mile-stones of his progress in the walks of life, that told how far in the path of duty he had advanced.

The future, which was ideal, lay like a clouded landscape before him, whose objects the telescope of the present might alone define. And then there came a deep disgust of the scenes in which late he mingled, as he found repose in his village home. There came an earnest weariness of the hypocrisy and the deceit of those with whom, even for good, he had associated. There came a desire to work out good in a lowlier manner. Politics no longer seemed the avenue in which he might walk to seek the right, to crush the wrong; but a desire did come to work humbly for his race in another and a far different sphere.

His somewhat too sensitive nature had been almost blighted by the neglect, the wrong, the contumely, of those for whom he had worked heart and brain. And, therefore, from the rough sea of political power, he wished to glide to the calmer lake of religious influence, about which there floated a purer air.

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He knew that in the sphere of the minister he could do much, very much, towards the advancement of those cherished projects upon which he had lavished his best energies. He knew that the deep earnestness of his purpose, in a lowlier walk, would create friends and find proselytes. He knew that, if we work diligently in that sphere of action that may be ours, great good may be accomplished.

Therefore it was that the bright dream of his voyage on the sea of politics passed away, and he resolved to work in a clearer atmosphere, that so much more suited his inner nature now.

Political power no longer had charms for him. Political honors were but brief, brilliant, sunlight gleams, that the storm of popular feeling, as with him it had been, might darken away. He studied for the ministry during the next year, and, always liberal in opinion, carried his sentiments of toleration even into religion.

From that hour his most earnest purpose was first to become a pastor; and to one so talented, so known, so respected, an opportunity was not long a stranger. Indeed, he refused liberal offers from the large cities, in order that he might find that rest in the country, for body and soul, that he so much desired.

Aware, as he was, that in the larger sphere of the city he could accomplish more, still he thought it wisdom to defer accepting an offer there, till a year or so had passed away.

Most pleasantly for him, he was now called to act as colleague to the venerable pastor who, for long years, had statedly ministered unto the flock of which his family and *her* parents had formed a part.

He was thirty-two when first he entered upon his duties as minister. The first day he preached from the sacred desk was one of singular beauty. The trees, in their autumnal splendor, seemed to be caressed by the wind-spirits of the season, who, in their embraces, tore the yellow leaves away; and the withering grass seemed as fresh to him as that of the green spring-time.

He ascended into the pulpit, to take his part in the service of his ordination. And then, when the time had come for him to speak, he rose as calmly as the resolve was made to become what he then was, to address his congregation. O, such words of beauty as fell from his lips! such

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words of hope, of mercy, of encouragement! such burning sentences of love!

Aye in the new sphere, perhaps better than in the old, he might work out good, seeking to give virtue its own beauty and vice its own blackness; teaching to turn to the brighter side of every picture, rather than to the darker one; teaching that love is the golden link that binds man to heaven; teaching that truth and liberty and justice will yet prevail. And so the years of his diligent exertions went silent by, each, as they passed, witnessing some new hopes awakened, some new schemes accomplished, some dark scenes made pleasant.

So noble and so beautiful it was, this work of love; and so pure and so God-like they were, the aims of his life! And higher and higher, and brighter and brighter, glowed the vestal-fires that *she* tended within his breast.

His fame spread far and wide; his deeds were the ever-eloquent eulogists of his character and worth. He still moved alone on this path of life, that for himself he had marked out. He had no gentle domestic angel, to give new pleasure to the pleasures won by action. He had not one to whom the gentler emotions of his heart he could tell.

The spirit of the love of his youth still lived within him; and, with that as his guardian angel, he could walk the world alone in a pleasant solitude. In solitude, if you will, yet very far from lonely; because love of man like his makes friends; because duty plants flowers, that, while they bloom, it can be only a beautiful solitude.

There was one friend, however, upon whom he had begun to look with much interest. She was the cousin, and a being so like the Lucy Crittenden of his youth, that from the first moment he saw her he felt a deep interest in her welfare. She was much younger than himself, and they told him, till he had come among them, the wildest and gayest of all her gay companions.

Most certainly a change had come over her, and, though it might naturally be expected that, in his company, she would be more sedate, yet she was not as she had been among her friends.

She had heard much of Herbert Grayson ere they met; and although the ideal being which she had painted had not at first seemed realized, still he soon became in her eyes the perfection of that ideal. She

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esteemed him for his moral worth, manly dignity, and for the name of greatness which the world had given him. And he took interest in her, because she resembled that being whom he had first loved.

Ever in his church did he see her in her accustomed seat, with the earnest blue eye so fixed upon him, and the sweet face ever reminding him of her who was low in her grave. Ever, when the strong words of truth found earnest expression, and the utterance grew thrilling, did he see, when they were past, the eye filled with tears, and the cheek paled or rose-tinted with emotion. And thus the beautiful face in the real grew to be what was the spiritual love in the ideal. It was indeed so; for he looked now, with an anxious fear that it might be absent, for the continual presence of that face upon which the emotions of a fresh, a noble-beating heart, were legibly written. He grew to become one who looked towards that mirror of high thoughts, to know when he had spoken nobly.

Was it strange that she who, it was plain, worshipped him, should seem the dead revivified to him, who, while working with such accomplishing energy in the actual, had yet so much lived in the ideal? From the brilliant girl, Emma Maitland had grown to be the retiring, earnest woman.

With a mind already well cultivated, she became even more studious in the leisure that she could find after the hours of her school. Oftentimes she wished she were rich, that she might devote all of her time to the one object, improvement. But such hours of study as were at her command she well used. Her retirement and studious habits even began to be commented upon; but still she studied, she thought. And for what did she thus employ the hours which the young, like her, gave to pleasure? Why were the text-books so distasteful to maidenhood so conned by her? — ah, why were these things so? But to her heart these questions did not for a long time come; — when they did, what was there to answer? A dim, vague, shadowy form of thought came; but it was the shadow cast before the substance, not after it; and to her heart there was surprise at her inability to answer the secret, searching question.

Was there, then, a secret in her heart, she asked herself; and the light of inquiry threw a gleam upon the images of her hopes set up within the cavern-grotto of her heart. She saw them as they were!

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From that moment she sought his presence no more, save at church. She studiously avoided him in his walks, and remained for days at home, without appearing anywhere but at school. But the pastor's duties gave him privilege of visiting the house where she and her parents dwelt; and there, at least, she could not avoid him. Here in her home Herbert Grayson sought her presence, since she would not seek his; and she knew, she felt, that she was the magnet that drew towards her house his frequent visits.

Well, one night Herbert Grayson spoke those words that gave utterance to the deep feelings of his heart; and then, O, then the clouds that had lowered so heavily around her burst and vanished, as she told him that forevermore she would be his.

They were married. But to neither, as to some, did the belief come that with this era in their histories the great purpose of life was accomplished. To neither did the thought come, that they were to live now for themselves alone. Life's purposes, to him, were as yet attractive as once they were; life's work was still as earnest. But the difference was, that now he felt that there was one beside him who could share with him every noble thought, every generous emotion, every great impulse, of his being. And, therefore, he thanked God that it was so; for now a niche in his heart was filled, that the circumstances of the past two years had made and decorated for its loved image.

Yet again the sea of life, in its various phases, was rolling before him, and he stood, as it were, on a light-house island, from which, when the storm of evil had wrecked his brother-man, he launched his life-boat to save.

Emma Maitland was, indeed, the good angel of his life, who, when wearied of the world's wrong, as he sometimes was in his long battle against it, incited him to renewed efforts, and refreshed his fainting spirit. She it was who continually retouched the picture of life, that *she* first had painted. She it was who, hand in hand with him, went forth to seek new circles of action in which he might move. She it was who, when he laid his aching head in her lap, counselled him, and soothed the spirit that sometimes grew impatient at what seeming little it had accomplished.

Three years after marriage, Herbert Grayson had moved to one of the

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great cities of his country, and there had diligently entered into the new and wider sphere of action. And with that singular singleness of purpose, that had so long actuated him, he drew the good from the evil, placed sinking poverty upon the platform of occupation, and dashed to the ground the red cup from many a lip. He spoke frequently in public on the subject of free-school education, — then in its infancy, — temperance and capital punishment. For the two first he fought bravely, and against the latter he struggled manfully. His intense application had begun to have visible effect upon his health, and his wife strongly urged his withdrawal from the ministry.

This was a step that she had long contemplated; for her ambition for her husband had traced out a new path, and her conjugal affection had grown fearful that his health was failing in his close application to his duties. To him the thought was a painful one; but his few objections were over-ruled by her woman's tenderness, and he prepared to leave the desk. Upon his brow care had ploughed its furrows, and here and there amid his hair a gray stranger told him that the frost of the autumn of his life had begun to fall upon his head. But his heart — ah! that was young still, that was as quickly touched by the tale of sorrow as in the days of yore, that beat with as noble emotions as once it did, that was ever the kind friend of manly projects and of the aspiring soul!

CHAPTER III.

When two months more had passed, Herbert and Emma Grayson were on the ocean, journeying toward the shores of England. This reached and traversed, he sought repose and health, in easy travelling, amid the wild glens and romantic dells of Scotland. And from thence he travelled into that land that has given birth to so many of the great of this world, that land so darkened by the priesthood's craft, that land that shall yet rise up to take its place among the nations of the earth, the emerald isle of Ireland.

Here he could only observe and learn; for the religious doctrines which he believed were sufficient to deaden, to that people, who so blindly trust, all words that he might speak.

Next they visited France; — France, that land of fame and glory;

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France, that land of despotism and of liberty; France, that land that shall yet reach, — ay, notwithstanding all iron shackles of military control, all influences of usurping and royal power, — shall yet reach that level of freedom which her younger sister, America, has gained. And in France, as in Ireland, Herbert Grayson visited the lowest hovel and grandest palace, the prisoner's dungeon and the courts of justice; and alike in the lowest, as well as the highest, he found food for contemplation, objects of reforming regard.

In all that woman may act, Emma Grayson was ever busy; and, while as his wife she shone in the *salons* of the great, yet she shone as brightly in the dark places of life which with him she visited. To the mountains of Switzerland next they went, — those mountains amid which the footsteps of Freedom have never ceased to echo, and where, to all time, they will still continue to rove. Hungary next was sought, where, since their steps trod that way, a mighty revolution has swept. O, Hungary! oppressed and bleeding Hungary! when, when will you rise again? O, land where the struggling spirit of freedom lies chained, when will you burst your fetters? O, thou, whose voice so eloquent, and whose tale of wrong so moving, has told thy country's history, when wilt thou be strong to renew the conflict? O, spirit of the Future, tell me when the eagle of Liberty shall conquer the northern bear of tyranny!

And now again the blue waves of the Atlantic frothed beneath the bows of the vessel that bore the Graysons to their home. A few brief weeks seem passed, in whose each separate day life gave to him the elixir of health, and they were again at home. The rustic, not the city home, sought they first; and there, amid old friends, did they meditate on the days of their coming years. In the thoughtful man and high-souled woman did the humble friends recognize the earnest workers in life's different paths of error and of evil. And some wondered how she had changed since first she knew him; and some marvelled at the deep love, that was so manifest, between him the man of forty, and her the woman of twenty-five.

There had come to them one link that bound them yet stronger together in affection's bonds; for the link was their dark-haired, thoughtful-eyed boy. Then, too, the mother's heart found duty, pleasure, in her efforts to mould the character of him, who in all things seemed the calm,

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thoughtful, earnest prototype of his father. Nor did Herbert Grayson neglect his domestic duties in his intenser pursuits in the outward world; for he knew that it is one of man's noblest spheres to train the mind of the young. He had not again entered the desk, but in his private circle still worked out the projects that his youth had planned. He remembered all those hopes of his spring-time, some of which he had lived to see accomplished in this the early autumn of his days, and some would not reach maturity till death had come to many generations of workers like him.

It was at this time that again his name was asked to be used as candidate for Congress. He remembered how in politics even those with purest motives often fail; but the words of his angel wife, and the spirit of duty within him, bade him not refuse. In effect he expressed his willingness that he should again be brought before the world as the candidate and representative of liberal opinions.

One night, when he had been long writing in his study, he bethought himself of that letter that *she* had written in that time, that, as he looked back upon the road of the past, seemed so very distant. And with the thought he opened one of the drawers of his desk, and taking thence a package of letters, labelled "Letters of My Youth," he opened the large bundle. One letter, carefully preserved within a cover, he opened and spread before him. Why needed he thus look upon it, whose every pen-stroke was lithographed upon his heart? But to him there was a melancholy pleasure in thus re-reading the holy memento of the past, — to him came the old dream in all its pristine brilliancy. And, as he pushed back his hair from off his forehead, he asked himself how much he had done, as he could see how much he had left undone. He asked himself if he had reached that ideal of man's perfection that *she* had pictured, and *he* had framed? He asked himself if now, in this new honor that had been offered him, there had not been some ambition in his acceptance. And the answer came — yes. But, ah! he knew it was a hallowed ambition, not a selfish one, albeit in it there might be some little, some very little dross; he knew that it was that ambition which is of kindred nature to the gods.

While thus he communed with himself, his memory brought again that death-night before him. As he mused, the present melted quite away,

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and the past stood in its place. And as he lived over again that night, his spirit, as if indeed it had gone back to that spring-time of life, grew refreshed and strong, and dreams of greatness and of goodness floated mistily through his brain.

The fall of 1820 came round. Herbert Grayson was elected to represent his district in the national legislature. Once more, then, he had plunged into the sea of politics, and the tide of popularity carried him triumphantly onward. The session at Congress was now about to commence, and the representatives of the sovereign people were pouring into the capital. Caucuses of all parties were held nightly, and in due time Congress was organized.

To Emma Grayson this was a new sphere; but yet, to one of her ambitious mind, one most pleasing. She worshipped her husband, and, while the purest motives had and did actuate her good deeds, still there was ever an intense desire in her woman's heart that her husband might rise to power in the councils of his country. She was a true woman; true in scattering good around her, true in ever cultivating a spirit of noble effort in the minds of those who surrounded her, true in desiring greatness for her idol. In her new sphere she looked about to see what might be done; and humbly, and unknown to any of her husband's associates among the great, she formed a school for the poor, where she devoted three hours each day to their instruction. Nor did duties of a kindred nature prevent her from acting her part on the stage of life as *his* wife; but with queenly dignity, and with liberal hospitality, did she entertain her husband's friends. Indeed, the circle of political and literary friends that was drawn around the Graysons was surpassed by no other one amid all the brilliant assemblages of that year.

In the halls of Congress, as in every orbit of action in which he moved, Herbert Grayson did his duty. No subject which anywise had relation to the cherished sentiments of his heart was so trifling that he failed to discuss it; not in the style of the demagogue, not with the desire solely of political fame, not for the purposes of displaying his graces of elocution, — but with the earnest, the intense purpose of spreading liberal doctrines, of kindling a pure fire of patriotism. His country to him was next to his God. He looked upon it as the pioneer of liberty, whose prosperity and whose deeds would influence the destiny of the world.

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He looked upon it as it is, as the successful champion of the principle of man's self-government, and as the monument of liberty, so noble and so towering that the eyes of all men, however lowly their degree, may in all coming ages see. He looked upon it as the battle-field where all contests of ideas may be fought, and where alone, of all countries of the world, abstract principles may be freely discussed. And well would it be if more, many more, like him there were.

Ah! there are those, I fear, who think not of their country's good, who dream not of their country's destiny, who toil not for the consummation of those purposes for which I believe America has become what it is. O, God! grant, then, that there shall be those like him, who shall give their minds, their hands, their lives, to complete the statue of the perfect man, and the moulding of a perfect world!

In all the public measures of the season Herbert Grayson took an active part; and when the great debate on the admission of Missouri arose, his voice was often heard. With his liberal ideas, he must and did combat the project of making it a slave state; but, with his ideas, too, of his country's ultimate greatness, he denounced, also, all ideas of disunion. And, conceiving the principle of the enslavement of one class to another to be a false one, and that, therefore, it would, by natural causes, die out, he advocated more strenuously, perhaps, the preservation of the Union than the exclusion of slavery. That difficult and exciting question was settled by the famous compromise of the great and immortal Henry Clay. And although some few there were to condemn the course of Herbert Grayson, yet the majority went with him. For himself, Herbert Grayson turned not toward an admiring constituency any more than to the condemning few; but of his own heart — of that inner spirit who lived in perpetual youth within his breast — did he seek approbation. He had sought his country's good, believing that by securing her prosperity the leprosy of social evils would fall away.

There came a time again when once more he sought his quiet home beneath his mother's roof; and weary, for a little while, of the world's activity and bustle, he prepared to leave Washington.

Night and day he travelled to reach his wife and boy, whom he had sent on some days previous to the end of the session. He arrived in the vicinity of his mother's house late in the afternoon, and, to his surprise,

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was met at the stage-coach office by a committee of his admiring friends. These would allow him to proceed privately no further; but, seating him in a carriage, he was driven off rapidly with them to the next station. Here, as the vehicle came in sight, he heard the sound of the booming cannon; and, as he looked out, he saw the military which the county boasted drawn up to receive him, and crowded thickly around them, and now around the carriage, the cheering multitude stood.

It came so unexpectedly, this reception, so spontaneously, that the heart of Herbert Grayson rose in his throat, and he could only acknowledge their welcome by bowing.

Then he was transferred to an open barouche, while the small body of military acted as his escort, and the vociferous crowd formed partly into procession. He passed into his native town; and to him it seemed, as it really was, that men and women of the neighboring hamlets and villages had gathered here thus to heartily welcome him. His name rang out upon the air in various tones, from the shrill piping of the boy to the stentorian shout of the man. And the white waving handkerchiefs of the beautiful seemed to say to him, "Welcome, welcome, thou worker, home!" Cheer after cheer followed the carriage, and bouquets of flowers fell thickly into his lap. The bells of the churches rang out their greeting, and the cannon hoarsely told its welcome. In that hour, Herbert Grayson felt that there *is* recompense, even in this world, for the earnest worker. He felt that there *is* a spirit left in men that applauds and is thrilled by noble exertions.

The daylight was fading in the west, but the sovereign people kept on to the town-hall. Into this he was ushered, and then led into a private chamber. And here there came to him the noise of the entering crowd, and the shuffle of many feet. Here he was told that his friends wished to listen to some of those great sentiments to which he had given utterance upon the floor of Congress. Presently he walked into the large hall, filled as it was with men below, while the galleries (for the building had been a church, and now was used for various purposes) were quite filled with ladies. As he appeared upon the platform, a perfect storm of applause greeted him; but then a comparative calm fell upon the waves of tumult, as the appointed orator arose to welcome him by speech. And then, whenever the name of Herbert Grayson was mentioned, the applause

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rang loudest to the speaker's ears; and at last he finished. Then Herbert Grayson replied; and such words as eloquence can utter, such thoughts as nobleness of spirit can tell, such pictures of beauty as imagination can paint, — all, all came flowing now from his lips, in soft and musical tones, and anon in thrilling, burning sentences.

He spoke *sometimes* of his deeds, of himself. He spoke of his country, of his country's destiny; and he moved the very souls of those before him, till they swelled with patriotic impulses, with noble aspirations. He painted the pictures of good in gorgeous colorings. He portrayed the evil in dismal shadows. He touched the springs of love and hope within their bosoms there, till they gushed forth like the waters of the mountain-torrent. Long, long and earnest, were the shouts that went up when he ceased, and he knew that, even there, — there, in that scene of his own personal triumph, — he had done *some* good; for to touch the nobler feelings of men is to accomplish something.

They bore him in triumph home. Here he bade them farewell; and then he bade farewell to all of care, to all of thought, to all of action; for he was again at home, and with his loved ones. That night, when they retired, Herbert Grayson, encircling the waist of his wife with his arm, sat down beside her to speak to her, as often before he had done, in tones more like the impassioned lover than the strong, actual, yet ideal working-man. What he said was this:

"Dearest, there has never come a time to me when I could regret that you and I were one, and there never could be one who could love you more than I. In all that I am or may be, in all that I have done or shall do, how much I owe to you! And yet, how little the world, even as it applauds me, thinks of you, — you, my best, my guardian angel!"

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THE ASTEROIDS.

BY JOHN COOPER VAIL.

From the wilderness of ether rolled a world of splendor bright,
Ushered, like a golden chaos, from the bosom of the night;
Casting off its sable garments, as it rose on airy spars,
Till it filled the void with glory, near the burning planet Mars;
And the brightest hosts of heaven, that through leagues of nature trod,
Saw a rival jewel sparkle in the diadem of God!

On its fair and matchless bosom Edens lay, like gauntlets cast,
To be taken up by angels, as it swept in glory past.
River, lake and virgin forest, clad in bright eternal gleams, —
Pure as thought can only fancy in the imagery of dreams, —
And the sea of space was furrowed with the foam of light afar,
When its pliant billows crumbled round the foot-steps of the star.

Lofty peaks of Alpine grandeur rose to greet the azure skies,
Like the tombs of rebel genii, ruled by Solomon the wise;
And the storm-king sowed his harvest over each enchanted pyre,
While the sluggard earthquake slumbered on his couch of living fire;
Every fair and happy valley with hosannas seemed to flow;
Every wind, like Jacob's ladder, bore an angel to and fro!

Many a fleet of angel commerce rode its oceans deep and wide;
Many a lovely island glistened on the blue, unruffled tide;
While hemispheres of beauty wove their mirage garments fair,
When cities, fields and forest, stood suspended in the air.

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Every zephyr seemed to shiver with the weight of trees and towers;
For the sky breathed only glory, and the earth breathed only flowers.

Flowers, such as bloomed in Eden, to earth's virgin bosom pressed;
Cities, like the hazy splendor twilight buildeth in the west;
Like a jewel, pure and spotless, from the artist's hand it rolled,
And the spray of light reset it in a firmament of gold.
'T was a world of youth and beauty, for the wizard Time to reap,
When its rivers, lakes and valleys, charmed the demons of the deep.

From the stagnant seas of darkness, teeming with unholy things,
Swarms of Demons, Shapes and Genii, spread their huge and dusky wings,
Armed like Satan's proud battalions from the throne of heaven hurled,
When they paused in countless numbers round the bright, beleaguered world;
Fell a storm of fiery arrows, from the fields of air supplied,
And the Seraph and the Cherubim with thunderbolts replied!

Fragments shattered by the comet, breathing universal doom,
Fossils, forged by fate eternal, in the hemispheres of gloom,
Hurled with demon force and envy, crushing angel casque and shield,
Till the star of spotless beauty from its golden orbit reeled,
And the bright retreating angels, conquered by the demon's art,
Saw its continents and oceans crumble heavily apart.

* * * * * * * *

In the boundless sea of ether still four lovely islands stand,
Floating Edens, angel-guarded, brighter far than fairy land,
Where the son of science ponders over mysteries concealed,
To the truthful poet only by the angel world revealed.
What are poets but the prisms, formed to shadow God alone,
When they cull the fairest flowers from the garden of his throne!

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THE LAST WARNING.

BY HARRY HUNTER.

When night leads on its silent hours, and shuts out, with its dark curtains, all the light and activity of the busy world, we naturally recall our wandering thoughts, and review the old histories, quaint portraits and strange memories, laden with which the past returns to us. We all have treasured up, within the archives of the boundless ages gone by, the memory of some scene of pleasure, — a reminiscence that comes back to touch some hidden heart-chord, and make it vibrate in tones of heavenly sweetness, and perchance, too, of happiness. And some of us have also recollections of a far different class, which come upon us sometimes like the terrific gale, that breaks the harp-strings over which it too harshly sweeps! My recollection of Ned Belmont is of this latter kind; and I never recall, without a shudder, his early and lamented fate.

We were classmates, and intimate friends; and the circumstances I am about to relate, transpiring under my own observation, made a deep and lasting impression upon my mind, which I have often wished might be shared with all who are subject to like temptations.

Ned was my first college acquaintance; and, although we were a little "*fresh*," still there was a mutual attraction, a kind of spiritual magnetism, that drew us together, and made us warm friends.

Possessed of a rare talent to gallop over and learn a lesson, as it were, by intuition, he seldom failed in the recitation-room, though he never consumed much time in study. With so much leisure, therefore, upon his hands, it is not strange that he should have fallen into temptation, and been led to contract alliances with the vicious, which resulted in

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fastening upon him many evil habits, to which we can justly attribute his ruin.

Nature had done everything for him that she could. Having a fine manly form, a handsome face, polished ease of manners, talent and wealth, he seemed a fit person to be the recipient of fortune's dainty favors. He was, besides, generous and whole-souled to a fault; and, being possessed of splendid conversational powers, his society was courted by the fashionable, and it is not too much to say that he was the attractive centre of every circle in which he moved. But what endeared him to me more than all else was his deep sense of honor, and his gentle, kind heart. For these qualities I loved him almost like a brother; and throughout our whole acquaintance we were wont to consider each other as something more than mere friends. It is not strange, then, that I should have been deeply interested in his career. During our second college year, Ned acquired the habit of drinking and gaming for amusement, as do too many of our talented and educated men. His friends reasoned with him, but in vain. The spirit was upon him, and he would not turn back to avert the danger that hung over him. His standing as a scholar, his health, and all the noble qualities of heart for which I esteemed him, began to decay; but he would not stop in his fearful career. The faculty at length became acquainted with his conduct, dismissed him from the institution, and addressed a letter of explanation to his widowed mother.

None but a mother can realize the heart-rending anguish caused by the receipt of such intelligence. It came upon Mrs. Belmont, who was in quite feeble health, like a tornado, and laid her all heart-broken upon what proved to be her death-bed. Immediately, however, upon the reception of the news, she addressed a short note to her erring boy. Ned came from the post with the letter, entered my room, flung it on my table, and requested me to read it and advise him what to do. It was as follows:

"My erring, though well-beloved child, your heart-broken mother wishes to see you once more, before she goes to meet your father in heaven.

"ANNA BELMONT."

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It was so sweet, and yet so kindly reproachful, that I could scarcely repress my tears, as I thought of the deep anguish of the heart that dictated such a letter.

Ned told me very briefly his plans for the future, in which I could see nothing encouraging; and then coolly asked, "Shall I go home?"

"Have you the heart, Belmont, to remain here in your dissipated revelry, when you know your mother, your only remaining relative, is trembling on the very verge of the grave; and, although her son has wounded her feelings and disgraced his name by his revels and midnight orgies, she still, in all her deep motherly love, lingers over the abyss of the tomb, to see her erring child again,—to bless him once more before she goes home to heaven! Belmont, hasten home, and promise your mother, on her dying bed, that you will never taste intoxicating drinks again, or play a game of chance! Say, my dear Ned, will you not go?"

"If you will accompany me," he replied. I expected that I should make him angry by speaking so plainly to him; but I was really vexed that he should have so far stultified himself as to become so indifferent to the wishes of his doting mother. Finding he would not go unless I accompanied him, I made immediate preparation, and we started for H—— by the first train of cars. As we thundered along the rails, the noise led me into a kind of revery. I could imagine something of the scene to which I was summoned as a witness. I could, in fancy, see the dying mother begging her child to give up the evil habits that had become fastened upon his otherwise noble character, and I had much hope that the effort made at such a time would be successful. Ned was uncommonly serious upon the journey, and from this symptom I argued much for his reformation. At length we arrived at our stopping place, and the "conductor's" voice, as he cried out the name of the "station," awakened me from my revery with a shudder; for I was dreaming of Mrs. Belmont, and I fancied his voice was the call of the death-angel my imagination had seen hovering over her bed. Leaving the cars, and procuring a carriage, Belmont sprang in after me, giving the driver his mother's address; and, adding an injunction of haste, again relapsed into his former silence. I had no disposition to attempt to rouse him; for, aside from my desire that he might profit by reflection, I was far too sad to think of consoling another. I had learned to love and respect Mrs.

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Belmont very dearly, from what I had seen of her noble character in her letters to her son; and I could not have been very much sadder, if she had been a near relative of my own, whom I had known from my infancy.

The carriage stopped before the mansion of Mrs. Belmont, and we alighted. Ned, hastening to the door, rang the bell with violence, which brought out a servant, of whom he inquired concerning his mother. Learning that she was very low indeed, Ned sent up word to the nurse of his arrival, and, meanwhile, we disencumbered ourselves from the travelling clothing we had assumed to defend us from the cold. While we were waiting for a message from the sick room, I saw that Ned was somewhat restored to his natural feelings, and a hope came welling up into my heart that seemed to say that he would be rescued from his course of dissipation and ruin. After a few moments the servant returned, with a request from Mrs. Belmont that Edward and his friend would walk up to her bed-side. I thought it singular that I should be included in the request; but, nevertheless, silently followed my friend up the stairs, and into the room. A faintness crept over me, and I came near falling, as I cast my eyes upon the strange, and to me unusual scenes of the sick room, and as the thoughts of the past came back to my burdened mind.

The mother recognized her son as soon as he opened the door; and, as he approached the bed, she took his hand, and casting her tearful eyes upon him, exclaimed, "My child, I am so thankful that you did not quite forget me, amid your revels!" and then, as the tears of mental pain coursed down her pale cheeks, she said, "O, Eddy, will you not promise me to be a better boy; for you do not know how sad it made me to hear such bad stories of you!"

Ned could stand it no longer, but, falling upon his knees, he wept very bitterly, and in tones of heart-felt sorrow and penitence begged of his mother not to leave him. "O, mother, dear mother, *do* not die now! I cannot give thee up now."

I have never witnessed since such a touching and thrilling scene. Standing, as I did, a spectator of that holy hour, it made an impression upon my mind for eternity. I remember now, as distinctly as if but a day had elapsed, each little circumstance of that deeply solemn death-scene. Mrs. Belmont was lying propped up in the bed, and its snow-

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white counterpane, on which was laid a thin and wasted hand, was scarcely paler than her face. Her eyes shone with an unearthly brilliancy, for the angels that were lingering to take her spirit home to heaven had breathed into them a radiance stolen from the great golden lamps of her future dwelling-place. O! it was a holy scene, — the penitent child weeping at his dying mother's bed-side, — weeping tears of sorrow that are purer and dearer to angel eyes than all the gems of earth!

After a few moments Mrs. Belmont faintly called me to her, and feelingly said, "They tell me you are the friend of my Eddy; and I have called you here, to request of you the performance of a mother's dying wishes. I beg of you to counsel and assist my boy in reforming his evil habits, and regaining his lost position. Be friends, then, to each other, when I am gone!" Here Ned burst out again, wildly begging her not to leave him. — "When I am gone, my young friend, my boy will have no relative on earth, — no friend to aid or counsel him, save you." Then, taking our hands, she placed them together, and added, "God in heaven bless you both! To His protection and the friendship of your young comrade I leave you, my darling child, the son of my prayers and affection. Remember to never touch the intoxicating bowl again; for your fate is sealed, if you provoke it by daring to tamper with the wine-cup. Remember, *this* is your mother's last warning. Farewell! Meet me in heaven!" and then, exhausted, she fell back, and in a few moments expired. We remained crying and sobbing over the lifeless form for a short time, and then they led us away, utterly helpless and heart-broken. Sleep stole upon our wearied natures late in the night, and then we forgot our real to dream of fancied miseries. On waking in the morning, I repaired to the chamber of death, — opened the door, walked in, and closed it after me. I tremblingly advanced to the bed, upon which lay the stiffened form of Mrs. Belmont, covered with a pure white sheet. Her face was concealed by a napkin. I removed it, and for the first time in my life I was alone with the dead. Never shall I forget the horrible, soul-crushing feeling of awe which crept over me as I gazed upon the gentle countenance of the departed mother, and I seemed to hear her voice saying to me from the angel-land, "Meet me in heaven." I could not realize that those lips were forever motionless, around which there seemed to linger the sweetest smile I ever saw. My mind reverted

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to *my* mother far away in her home, by the sea-shore; and I recalled to my mind the many times I had pained her by my neglect and waywardness. In fancy's ear I could hear her gentle voice, trembling with painful emotion, repeating once more, "How can you grieve me so?" And then I thought how terrible it would be if she, *my* mother, should die too, like *Ned's*, and *I* be left alone. I could not endure to think of that. While I was thus employed, the door opened, and Ned came in. He walked to my side, gave one look upon the sweet face before us, and burst into a paroxysm of tears. I replaced the napkin, and we left the room.

The next day Mrs. Belmont was buried; and how dreary the world seemed to *us*, although it smiled upon *others!* How utterly desolate seem our hearts when we have performed the last sad rites of earth to a friend! No matter how brightly the sun may shine for others, it cannot penetrate hearts bowed down with such deep, inexpressible grief. No matter how gayly the world around may be dressed, it has no attraction for those mourning departed friends, the loved and the lost. They only see the image of the dead; only hear the angel voices that speak to them from the air; only live in the hopes of the past and the miseries of the present. They are blind to everything, save their own utter loneliness; this absorbs every other sensation in its hideous and unfathomable darkness.

Thus sadly Ned began to arrange his business affairs. After rendering him all the consolation and assistance I could, for a few days, I left the solemn place, to return to my own duties. Circumstances soon after placed a vast expanse of country between Ned and myself, although we kept up a regular correspondence. From his letters I never learned anything relative to his course since his mother's decease; but, from their regular appearance, I judged he had kept the reformatory resolution made at that period. I knew nothing to the contrary, until a letter summoned me to his bed-side. I found him a bankrupt in health, morals, mind and wealth, a mere wreck of his former self. He had remained true to his resolution, and been strictly a total abstinence man, for a year or more, after we parted, when, being led away by evil companions, he was induced to take a *single* glass. This was enough; his old appetite was lashed to fury again, and he was ruined. That fatal glass woke the slumbering demon within him, and from that moment his descent to the

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drunkard's grave was as rapid as it was certain. I arrived in time to see him die; and I watched beside him until the last scene was over. Never, never shall I forget the terrible remorse, the wild shrieks of despair, and the torments, of those few hours.

Would that all who are exposed to similar temptations could, for a moment, witness the death-bed scenes of a son who despised his dying mother's LAST WARNING!

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FLOWERS FOR THE DEAD.

BY HELEN MAVERICK.

SISTER, I bring thee flowers,
My last, last gift to thee;
Thus, as in happier hours,
My offering now shall be.
Sweet flowers they are, and pale,
Sad autumn's latest born;
Their summer sisters frail
Are in their brightness gone.

No roses gay and bright
Are in my sad bouquet,
No emblem of delight
Shall deck thy couch to-day.
The last of Flora's train
I bring, the gift of grief,
And wet with sorrow's rain
Is every fragrant leaf.

Annie! thy brow is cold,
Thine eyes shut wearily;
O, never as of old
Those eyes will beam on me!
Never will glow that cheek
As touched by magic power;
Never those lips will speak,
To thank me for a flower!

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Pale blossoms! ye are meet
  The brow of death to grace, —
To weave a garland sweet
  Around the still, cold face.
She loved you, gentle flowers,
  And praised your radiant bloom;
Ye cheered her latest hours, —
  Go with her to the tomb!

Go, perish on her breast,
  Types of the good and true;
Go, share her icy rest,
  Whose heart was pure as you;
O, flowers! ye shall no more
  Unclose your starry eyes,
But, death's long slumber o'er,
  She will awake and rise!

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VISIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

A CHILD, with dreamy blue eyes and chestnut hair, sat under the shadow of a huge old elm-tree, that spread out its long arms, as if in blessing, above him. The long, graceful shadows rocked tremulously around, and the sunshine flickered and coquetted among the jealous branches, until it fell in bright and broken fragments upon the ground beneath; but all these were unheeded by the child, for fairer scenes — such only as visit childhood, the childhood of the gifted — were floating, a gorgeous phantasmagoria, before his spirit-gaze. The molten glory that is not borrowed of the sunlight, the dim, distant music, deeper and more melodious than aught that hath visited the harp or the lip of mortal, and the far-off gleaming of angel-plumage, filled that spirit-dream with beauty.

Suddenly there came a breeze, low, and at intervals, at first; but at length it grew louder and longer, until it sobbed among the branches of the old elm, and the long arms swayed to and fro; and the child started up, while a shadow crept into the blue eyes as they opened once more, and then he clasped his small hands, and cried, in a voice pathetically sweet, "Beautiful thoughts, where have you gone?"

"Where have you gone?" Has not this, child of genius, been often the language of your spirit, when memory's wand has marshalled before it those by-gone visions that have filled your later life with haunting unrest? And yet it is well, with the stern responsibilities, and the great, earnest work of life before you, that they have departed. Well that, with the solemn shadows of eternity stretching with every setting

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sun longer and broader upon your pathway, the light, not of this world, which filled the slumber of your childhood, should return to you no more.

The mountain, the sky and the wave, have graven in ineffaceable characters their sublime theology upon your spirit's tablet; and so the visions of infancy may not have been without their mystic teachings. A time will come when the pealing trumpet of the archangel shall reverberate through the "dark cellars of the earth," and "the milky way shall fold its long arms together," and the great "God light," streaming outward, shall fold the heavens and the earth in its shroud of fire, and the everlasting song, rolling over the hills of jasper, shall first break upon your ear. But not altogether unfamiliar shall it seem to you; for those seraph-harps may thrill with "snatches of melody" such as you have heard before; and when your spirit wanders beneath the fragrant branches of the far-spreading Tree of Life, and the angels shall fold their silvery-sounding wings together, it may be that amid those radiant faces you shall look upon those who peopled the dream-visions of your childhood.

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THE PORTIONLESS BRIDE.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

I SCARCE had thought I could not come
With worldly gear to thee;
I knew the gift a priceless one,
That would my portion be.
But whispered words have reached mine ear,
While standing by thy side,
Of taking from an humbler sphere
Thy portionless young bride.

I would not wrong the generous heart,
That far too well I know;
These blinding tears — *thou* hast no part
In all that bids them flow.
But O! beneath each withering word,
I find my lips unsealed;
Ere I am all thine own, beloved,
My all must be revealed.

I shall not come with pomp and pride
To grace my bridal hour;
Nor point to thee broad lands and wide,
And name them as my dower.
And I shall have no menial train,
Through which to pass to thee;
Thy coffers, piled with sparkling gain,
Will not be swelled by me.

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And I have no ancestral name,
To link, beloved, with thine;
My fathers — on no blood-dyed plain
Did their escutcheon shine.
And yet how oft this prayer I pour, —
One eye, the Sleepless, sees, —
"I bless Thee, Father," I have more
For him, far more than these!

My gift, beloved, doth all excel
That others' gold could buy;
Its worth — ah, vain its worth to tell,
All human lips should vie!
I bring to thee as true a heart
As ever man did share;
Nor weal nor woe from thee shall part
The love I 've garnered there!

I bring to thee that changeless love,
The strong, the deep, the pure,
That would, its faithfulness to prove,
"All things" for thee endure.
To guard thy way, the ceaseless prayer
That from affection flows;
Thy weal, my greatest earthly care, —
What wealth hath purchased those?

And when before the altar's side
I breathe my bridal vow,
As proudly, love, will stand thy bride,
As she is standing now.
Her glory, that the portionless
May bring to thine abode,
The richest gift, its halls to bless,
That mortal e'er bestowed.

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THE FAIRY'S GIFT.

BY ISAAC H. CLARK.

"LOVE *is* a most singular affair,—one beyond the reach of most mortals, as regards its secret and strange workings. From the days of Solomon the Wise even to the present hour, it has held the empire of the world, conquering those whom naught else could conquer. Lycurgus, the wisest of Spartans, fell a victim to its power; Socrates and Cato, two of the purest of philosophers, could not mail their breasts against its subduing influence; the warlike arm of Marcus Antony became enervated before the soft eyes of Cleopatra; Alexander the Great found this passion the sole despiser of his power; Cæsar suffered ambition to sleep, LOVE alone animating his aspiring breast; Napoleon conquered all but love. Ay!" I exclaimed, terminating my soliloquy,—for I had been muttering the preceding to myself,—"all *heroes* have, at some time or other, suffered from the darts of Cupid."

It was the first day, or rather evening, of January, and, thus ruminating, I rapidly paced my chamber, to the evident uneasiness of my fellow-lodger below, who ever and anon manifested his displeasure by most "mysterious knockings." However, his comfort was but of little importance to me; so back and forth I tramped, stopping now to kick a boot-jack under the bed, then noisily adjusting some offending chair. My minute fluid lamp soon began to burn dimly, warning me that its spirit would quickly depart, and that darkness would finally cause Morpheus to be my embracer. Still I continued my march, as if walking for a wager, or life depended upon accomplishing a certain number of miles before morning.

Let me briefly explain the cause of this, and give the no doubt anxious

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reader an insight into the why and wherefore. On the evening before, I had danced, waltzed and polked,—in short, kicked the old year out, and pulled the new incumbent in. More, I had enjoyed the company of the beautiful, enchanting, *divine* Addy Moreland, the belle of our circle, the most dreaded of female rivals. *Smitten* I had been, and I am not ashamed to own it! But then she had given me *such* encouragement, cast *such* glances, accepted my offers of assistance with so much readiness and sweetness, seemed only to be happy in *my* company, that, really, I was not to blame, being but human. The bait, if such it was, had been most scientifically thrown, and, having swallowed it, I was now a doting, miserable lover. My customary calmness — the boasted result of "single blessedness" — had vanished, and an unusual excitement conjured up the ghosts of the departed great, victims, like myself, to woman's fascination.

I was miserable; for I thought of the *beau*, the dreaded Charley Warren, her reputed favorite, and of her well-known coquettish disposition. Upon the evening in question, he had been unavoidably absent; and her supposed partiality for me might have arisen merely from that fact. If so, I was a fool to heed her, and she was an unfeeling, ugly, flirting minx. Doubtless she would consider it a good joke to relate to her lover on his return, and I should be laughed at for my devotion in his absence.

"Confound it!" I exclaimed, in my anger, as these doubts passed through my mind, "what an idiot I am to think of her."

I ceased, for a face so calm, gentle and confiding, arose before me, that I could no longer harbor a harsh thought. It was that of Anne Somers, the friend of my school-days, the dearest friend of my later years. All purity and affection, I had ever loved her as a sister, confided to her as would a brother. For years, neither had known joy or sorrow that the other had not shared, neither had adopted aught before obtaining the other's approbation. Younger than myself by some four years, I had been her constant guardian and protector, the more needed, as she was an orphan, without brother or sister.

As I said, her face seemed to arise before me, but a mournful gaze, one expressive both of pity and sympathy, appeared to mark the usually placid features, so emblematic of a heart at ease. I remembered the expression of her countenance the evening before, as, left to herself, she

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watched my unceasing attentions to the fair queen of our coterie. Not one particle of reproof did it convey, but of sincere regret for my blind devotion to one whose sole aim was probably self-amusement. My heart now smote me for my neglect, and the tones of her voice, as she bade me good-night, — for I had accompanied her home, — still rang in my ears, with a strange mixture of sweetness and sadness.

"Perhaps," I ejaculated, "she loves me with more than a sisterly affection! It may be that I have keenly wounded her feelings, and that even now she mourns my attachment for an unworthy rival!"

Her rival! What if the manifestations of last night were sincere? What if she really preferred me to the foppish Charles Warren? What a triumph it would be to defeat the boasting hero of a thousand successful skirmishes with love! What a blissful era in my life, when I should lead the fascinating Addy to the altar, and call her mine! Gods! the thought was too much for my present contemplation!

But, on the other hand, if her advances were, as I had supposed, and even now more than half suspected, but the deliberate triflings of a confirmed coquette? What if she was, at that very moment, laughing with her favored lover at my presumption, and accepting his offer to be Mrs. Warren? By Heavens! I would be avenged!

Here were two horns of a dilemma, and one infinitely preferable to the other. On one side, happiness, or, joined to such angelic beauty, at least the most favorable promise; on the other, the misery of being the laughing-stock of all my friends.

All? No, no! Anne never would share in what might hurt my feelings. No; she would remain true, though all others should desert me. In weal or woe, she would be the same, — a friend in need, a friend indeed.

Why, then, not ask her acceptance of my hand, and insure my happiness, since no doubt existed as to the result? She loved me as a brother, I felt certain; and, my heart seemed to add, as one nearer still, dearer than all the rest of the world.

Yet, if she regarded me only as a brother? What if my own heart, now awakened, for the first time, to a stronger feeling than I had ever before suspected, misled me, and prompted me to think its newly-aroused

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passion was returned? What if I was deceived in both cases, and discomfiture should alike terminate my hopes in each?

Long as it has taken to write these conflicting thoughts, like lightning they passed through my brain, leaving but uncertainty, at last, to answer my various conjectures. The fact was, I scarcely knew my own mind, so rapid had been its workings, and so sudden the thoughts newly presented for consideration. A novice in the art of love, the pulsations of my heart were too rapid for calm reflection, if such is ever practised while suffering from the darts of Cupid.

"But," I yelled, in my madness at the unfavorable conclusions, "to possess some talisman to read the heart! O, for the fairies' cap of invisibility, that in secret I might behold the tell-tale actions of real and seeming friends, that I might thus *know* their true worth!"

Ere the last word had ceased to vibrate upon the ear, an answer was returned, startling me, from its unexpectedness, as well as by the unearthly sweetness of the voice. Like the inimitable tones of the æolian harp sounded the words, as they seemed to float upon the air, from what point proceeding it was impossible to tell.

"*Mortal*," said the unknown, "*thy wish is granted. The power of becoming invisible to earthly sight is thine for one fleeting year. Abuse not the gift, nor destroy thine own happiness in its application. Profit by the experience gained, and seek not to know too much, for none are perfect.*"

With this advice, the strange, ethereal voice seemed gradually to die away in space, and naught remained to prove its reality, but a tiny cap, as light as if indeed woven from the supposed fabulous gossamer of fairy land. In my hand it laid, as visible to the eye as the message had been audible to the ear, — certain proof that imagination had not conjured up the accompanying sounds. Would it accomplish the assertion of the unknown giver, or was it even possible so delicate a covering could rest uninjured upon the head destined to try its wonderful powers? No; impossible!

However, it would cost nothing to test the question, foolish as might be the attempt; so, first satisfying myself that no roguish chum was concealed in the room, I stood before a mirror, prepared for the worst, — an end to my silly hopes.

Smiling at my folly, incredulous in the extreme, carefully did I place

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the long-desired talisman upon its destined resting-place. With a cry of astonishment and terror, I sprang back, for no answering reflection met my sight. Objects before, behind, around, each had their counterpart; I alone was wanting. Horror-struck, a feeling of indescribable dismay darting through my frame, increased by a tremendous knock from the previously-mentioned lodger below, which made me think the foul fiend himself had come, I tore the gift from its depository. *Then* a countenance pale and haggard, hardly recognizable as my own, appeared in the vacancy of the moment before. Trembling I stood, almost doubting my reäppearance to life,—for such I considered it,—almost afraid to look upon the object I had asked and gained. Like the man condemned to walk through life without a shadow, I felt a sense of loneliness come over me, and wanted the glass to do its accustomed work.

Regaining my composure, however, once more, slowly and fearfully, I ventured to try the extraordinary powers of the gift of fairy-land. My heart increased its pulsations; but the first shock, the consequence of my incredulity, was lessened, as the same result attended the second experiment. Emboldened by the trial, again and again did I render myself invisible, and then renew my appearance to sight, doubting, at each application of the magic gift, only to be finally convinced of my power. Delight then usurped the place of my former dread, and, with antics worthy of the chief of the Ravels, I danced around the room. Down fell the tongs, unable longer to keep their legs; over went a chair from sympathy; bang went the shovel and poker, no musical accompaniment, except to Chinese ears. In short, my bachelor friend below must have thought, from the noise, that "spirits" were indeed at work, and the "medium" a fit subject for temperance care.

Well might I be transported with joy, for I alone, of all mortal beings, was possessed of a power that rendered me beyond the reach of human government, and superior to earthly laws. Tyranny might bind the oppressed, might enforce towards others its unjust demands; but *I* could laugh at its dictates, despise its chains. Mystery might surround others, but, did I so desire, all actions were to me henceforth visible. Ignorance of men's motives was no longer my lot, and "impossible" would be seldom found in my vocabulary. A self-invited guest at every feast, at least an invisible presider, if such was my will, for the future I should

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know naught but pleasure, seek but for self-gratification. Enemies should feel my power, friends — if any such existed — command my aid. Wrongs I would redress, evils remove, and crime prevent. A king, an emperor, a despot, — *all* men were my subjects, were within the reach of my enchanted wand.

But hold! My power was to last but a year, — my invisibility was beyond my own control. Alas for my bright visions! I must soon descend to the common level, become one of the "witnessed of men." The twelve short months would rapidly fly by; then I might myself become subject to another, no less remote than myself from human observation. *To work, then!* to work! for every moment must be improved, and day and night must both witness my labors.

Biting my finger, to make certain it was not all a dream, I next determined to proceed to action. Cap upon head, then, I descended the stairs, deciding to let chance direct me, when once I should gain the open air, and recover from the excitement that caused the blood to rush through my veins with more than fever heat. As I reached the bottom of the first flight, my fellow-lodger, provoked beyond endurance, had commenced the ascent to make me a scolding visit. Laying my unseen hand upon his shoulder, I first made him perform a pirouette, then landed him, with a vigorous thrust, upon the floor of his own apartment. Hearing the noise, the occupant of the next room opened his door, only to be immediately collared by the enraged victim of my invisible attack. In the midst of criminations and denials from both, onward, or rather downward, I proceeded, — for I was a *high* liver, — finally reaching the street door, which I violently slammed. A confused sound of voices within, provoked at "the gust of wind," fell upon my ear, as I paused outside a moment, raising a slight chuckle from the "breeze," telling me that "fun" in plenty could be found on any route.

Where was I now to go?

As I stood upon the sidewalk, thus deliberating, the intentional, as it seemed to me, contact of a watchman, disturbed my revery. He was one against whom I entertained a grudge; and, as my power occurred to me, I resolved upon sport and revenge. Shouting his name, I pulled his cap over his eyes, tumbled him into an adjacent snow-bank, and began to pelt him well with the soft missiles of school-boys' winter warfare.

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Astonished and enraged, beholding no enemy, but feeling, of course, sure one must be near, the bewildered "guardian of the night" sprang to his feet, and looked eagerly around for the presuming foe. Even had he been gifted with "second sight," he was an unequal match for his invisible opponent; so once more I put him to bed, nicely tucked him in, and, with a motherly "good-night," bade him adieu. The whirling of his rattle, as I ran down the street, told me that he felt no gratitude for my kindness, whilst the answering sounds assured me assistance would soon reach him in his dire perplexity. Hoping they would secure the trespasser upon the quiet of their comrade, on I ran, laughing heartily at the futile efforts of the "Charleys."

Where was I to go? Where should I next put into practice my wonderful gift,— perform something more worthy of my station?

A brilliantly-lighted mansion put an end to my uncertainty; it was the residence of Addy Moreland; and I would, if possible, at once learn my destiny, test the real motives of the suspected trifler. If convinced of her perfidy, then should I seek the abode of one whom I sincerely trusted to be a more worthy rival.

Clad in my invisible armor, I silently entered, walking, without hindrance, into the spacious parlor, from which issued the sound of female voices. It was the occasion of the meeting of our church sewing-circle, of which the mother of my fair charmer was president; and I found myself in the midst of matronly beauty. Swift flew the needles, for the natives of some torrid zone island were in want of flannel garments, and no poverty could be seen at home. Yet, swiftly as moved the fingers of the workers, more rapidly rattled their tongues, well trained to speed by long years of constant exercise. O, I thought, in the midst of the horrid din, that genius could make woman's tongue a motive power! What could be nearer *perpetual motion?*

The first words I understood told me that they were discussing the merits of the young men of their acquaintance, and changed my intention of seeking more edifying company. True, I recalled to mind the saying that "listeners hear no good of themselves;" still, it was easy for me to leave, unseen, if circumstances should render retreat necessary.

"They *do* say," said a second Mrs. Candor, taking advantage of a moment's pause to express her belief, or, rather, disbelief, "that Mary

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Brinley is setting her cap for Edward Smith; but I think no credit should be given the report."

"Well, what she can see in him to admire, I can't conceive," answered the mother of four marriageable daughters. "Neither of my girls would endure his company, I assure you."

"For the simple reason that they have tried, and can't get it," I fairly ached to exclaim; but policy whispered silence.

"And what he can see attractive in Mary Brinley is very strange," joined in another anxious parent, whose daughter entertained some hope of "catching" the one named. "My Matilda says he has ridiculed her pretensions more than once."

"And those of your Matilda, too," I added, *sotto voce.*

"Rather dissipated, they *do* say," interrupted Mrs. Candor, "though I think there is no foundation for the report."

"Foundation!" instantly shrieked one notorious for her meanness, want of charity, and slandering propensities; "foundation! why, Mrs. B. says that Mr. C. heard from Joseph D. that Frank E., when in the city, saw him near a theatre, and had strong suspicions that he had just come out. Now, any young man who goes to the theatre drinks, of course; and if a drunkard is n't dissipated, I should like to know who is?"

At this conclusive logic, I fairly laughed aloud; but the sound was drowned by their numerous voices. Making up my mind to discard Ned's name from the temperance list,—for no doubt could remain of his guilt,—I awaited the next shot from the now fairly-aroused enemy.

"By-the-by," exclaimed an old maid, who was busily threading the point of her needle, but felt too sensitive upon the question of her age to use spectacles in the presence of others, "Mrs. Moreland, I heard, this morning, that Charley I. was very attentive to your Addy last evening. Where was Charles Warren?"

"O, Charles was out of town, on business," answered the listener, carelessly, "and you know girls *must* have a chaperon for the evening. Addy is very quick in penetrating character, and no one knows better how to draw lovers to her side."

"Mr. I. is *thought* to be very steady, is he not?" inquired Mrs. Can-

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dor, in an indifferent tone. "He probably will marry Anne Somers, and folks *think* will make a very nice husband."

"Yes, *think*," added the exposer of poor Ned, "but she will gain no great prize, in my opinion. No longer ago than last Thursday, he went on a sleigh-ride with Edward Smith and some others, and the whole party got so intoxicated that a watchman was obliged to take care of their horses, on their return."

I could scarcely refrain from making a prompt denial of the whole transaction, so vexed was I to hear such a lie manufactured at a moment's notice. However, I stifled my anger, anxious to hear more, fully resolved to make the narrator feel my power before the year had expired.

"No engagement between Addy and Mr. Warren?" asked the aforesaid old maid, finally threading her needle, showing that she had reached the "turning point."

"Not as yet," answered the mother, with a knowing shrug, that implied such an event might happen. "Charles is a very nice young man, his character unexceptionable, and I am perfectly willing to accept him as a son-in-law."

"I never believed the report of his trifling with the affections of Susan Morton," quietly remarked Mrs. Candor, "nor coincided with many, that such flirting young men generally prove inconstant husbands."

What answer this characteristic opinion might have drawn forth I am unable to say, for the door-bell rang at that instant, and Mrs. Moreland left the room, to attend the visitor. Her absence was the signal for Mrs. Severe, the relater of my inconsistencies, to express her sentiments, and she improved the opportunity.

"Mrs. Moreland," she began, with a sneer, "thinks Charles Warren a young man of unexceptionable character! Well, it is astonishing to me how blind some people are! No person with common penetration could be deceived in such a case. There is no more doubt in my mind that he is a gambler than that I am threading my needle this moment. His frequent visits to the city, and his present of some shells to Addy, are sufficient proof, in my eyes, of his occupation abroad. I *know* that he is a gambler, for the papers told of a descent upon a party, and of the seizure of the *shells*. What does he do with shells, if he don't gamble; or how came he by them?"

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Here was the commencement of an argument worthy of a Philadelphia lawyer, capable of being made the groundwork of all that is repulsive in character. To what an extent it might have been carried, had not the return of Mrs. Moreland disturbed the speaker, is uncertain. My sleigh-ride, probably, would have been as nothing to his adventures.

"It was Mr. Warren," replied the cause of the suspension, in answer to the inquiry of some one as to the visitor. "He has just come from the city, and called immediately to see Addy."

Leaving the party to dissect characters, and retail scandal, I left the room, anxious to witness the meeting of the supposed lovers, and thus learn my fate. Quite affectionate was the salutation of the coquettish fair one, as she received my rival; and a kiss, accepted and returned instantly, cooled my love down to zero point. Well aware that the conversation of lovers is of all things the most insipid to another, especially where that other sees only the destruction of his own hopes, I departed quietly, having been guilty of the impoliteness of not removing my cap during my interesting stay. I had been successful thus far, and learnt something of human nature that might be of service in the future.

Leaving the house, with rapid strides I gained the more humble abode of the less attractive Anne Somers, impressed more than ever with her real worth, yet fearful that, in my unknown presence, faults might be suffered to have visible and prominent place. Were she also fickle-minded and deceitful, assuming the garb of goodness only when seen by the world, and subject to its scrutiny, then farewell to my hopes, and an end to my dreams of happiness. Suspicion of all, to be probably verified into certainty, would fill my breast, and the gift of fairy-land prove a curse instead of a blessing. Better to remain in ignorance, when ignorance might be comparative bliss, than ruin the future by seeking to know too much.

Thus I cogitated, as I stood before the door, uncertain whether to enter, or defer my visit to some subsequent period. Through the window streamed the rays of a lamp, by the light of which I could discern Anne, busily sewing, whilst her aunt was reading from a large volume, apparently the Bible. The fine features of my now more than sister wore their usual expression of sincerity and goodness, lending a beauty to the intellectual countenance for which we seek in vain in the mere creatures

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of fashion. False?—No, it could not be! The heart must be pure, else why present such an index ever to view?

Silently, then, I opened the door, walked into the entry, and, unheard, gained the room, the door of which, fortunately, was ajar. The aunt was indeed reading the Bible, and that affecting passage of Ruth, where she avows her determination to forsake home, friends and kindred, for the love she bore another. A tear trickled down the cheek of the listener, as the reader proceeded, and her mind evidently was wandering to some such scene, in which she herself should be the heroine. Her fingers moved mechanically, and a sigh, apparently unconscious, told of thoughts known only to the thinker, but the purport of which an unseen observer could not help suspecting might refer, in some way or other, to himself. If not, of whom was she thinking; and who was the hero in the dreams of her imagination?

"Aunt," she began, in the sweet tones that had often soothed me in hours of grief, "aunt, is not the description of the sacrifice of Ruth indeed true to nature, and of the devotion we should feel for those we truly love? Often have I felt that love could atone for everything, and that no wealth could recompense its absence."

"Why, Anne," said the surprised listener, dropping her spectacles upon the floor, "why, Anne, what is the matter with you? All day long you have seemed out of spirits; and not even the pleasure of making that garment for poor widow Jones seems to have had any reviving power. Ah! I fear you are thinking of one too thoughtless to harbor a thought for you. Addy Moreland is wealthy and beautiful; and stronger-minded people than Charley find it difficult to withstand such temptations."

"Charley thoughtless!" interrupted Anne, in a tone of astonishment. "No, no! he thinks of me, I am sure, and will ever be the dear brother he has been for so many years."

"A *brother*, Anne! and do you think of him only as a sister? Poor girl! read your heart, and I fear that you will find that for him ever to be the husband of another will prove a severe disappointment."

"Not so, aunt," was the mild reply, though a shade of pain crossed the face of the speaker, for an instant; "not so, if he be happy, and the object of his love be worthy of him."

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"But you must not forget that, when married, his wife will alone engage his affections, and that you cannot be the same to each other that you have been."

"I had indeed lost sight of that," murmured the trembling listener, almost inaudibly.

"You have been acquainted so long," continued the anxious relative, gradually growing more warm as she proceeded, "and have been so intimate, that it is impossible you can entertain for him no feelings but common friendship. With him I know it may be different, engaged as he is abroad, seeing more of society, and easily led away by external show. Impulsive and confiding, I fear he will mate with the artful manager of outward worth, rather than with that less attractive maid, sterling merit. He will forget the friend of his youth, unconscious of the feeling he has excited, the misery he has created."

"But I never can forget him, or cease to regard him as a — brother," interrupted Anne, her eyes filled with tears. "If I change not, can it be that he will cease to remember me?"

"Yes; for men, amidst the cares of business, soon throw off all recollections of their youth, soon let ambition absorb every thought but of self. If affection holds any sway over them, it is for the wife of their bosom, the home that calls forth their energies, and receives them when labor is ended. Woman, more domestic, lets memory constantly revive the past, and fans the flame, which burns till it consumes. Anne, school your heart to indifference of his choice, ere it is too late, and you awaken to a sense of your own loneliness."

"I will endeavor to do so," was the sobbing reply; "but I begin to feel that it is a harder task than I had ever supposed. How often have I prayed that he might be happy, that he might gain one who should love him as a wife as I have as a sister! I knew not my own heart, or dreamt of the hour of separation. Still, marry whom he will, I shall wish his happiness alone, though my heart break at the contemplation."

She ceased; and, throwing her arms around the neck of her aunt, hid her face in the bosom of her guardian, who endeavored to soothe her by words of Christian consolation. As for me, I was nearly as much affected as the weeping Anne herself, and almost feared to breathe, lest I should be discovered, even invisible as I was to sight. My determination was

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made, and the morrow I was resolved should witness the pledging of our vows, and the termination of her grief. Thanks to my fairy friend, I had discovered the truth, and detected real merit.

* * * * * * *

The morning had somewhat advanced, and the sun's rays were pouring into my room, when I awoke from a sound slumber, and recalled to mind the events of the evening before. So forcibly was I impressed with the reality of its scenes, that I looked anxiously around for the tiny cap, the fairy's gift of invisibility. Not until after an anxious search, and a trial of my own head-covering, did I realize that the whole had been a dream, and Morpheus had been but playing one of his roguish pranks. From thinking, when awake, of the fairest of my female acquaintances, I had probably come to dream of their characters, truly or not I could not then determine. I had also learnt a lesson, in my short career, that would deter me from ever seeking fairy aid, even were such within my power. Where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise; and the faults of ourselves and friends are sufficiently palpable for our happiness, without being magnified.

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Nearly a year has passed, and I am writing my adventures in dreamland. From information there gained, I was led to observe the characters of my two favorites, and decide between them. Morpheus was right in his judgment, and I have selected the plain but confiding Anne Somers, confident that she is best suited for my happiness. She is at this moment looking over my shoulder; and, in defiance of my confession, I am forced to conclude,—

"It was not *all* a dream."

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A FRAGMENT:

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

BY GEORGE S. BURLEIGH.

"O Death! O Grave! O vague Hereafter!
O fathomless Wonder,
Lying under
Our clear, dim, bright, dark Life,
Stirred never by its strife,
Its joys and woes, its griefs and noisy laughter,
O, answer us!" ye cry,
In loud despairing;—
"O, answer us!" most hollow hearts reply;
Then voice and echo die,
Quivering an instant fitfully,
Like a sick torch-flame, quenched amid its flaring.
A moment more,
The lover sinks where sunk the loved before,
And the wild world whirls on, wild as it whirled of yore.

* * * * * * *

Let the earth-whirl roll along;
Leave the dead their dead to bury;
God hath reared his sanctuary
In the hearts of wise and strong;
Wheresoe'er his vital breath
Pulses, cometh naught of Death.
How can Death be where God is?

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God is life, and God is all;
Even the little sparrow's fall
Touches that great heart of his,
Which is giving us life and bliss,
Near as would the crash of a celestial ball.
Ah, faithless man! there is no power but Life;
The waves of being rise and fall,
With force eternal rife.

Heaved on the swell, ye shout, with exultation,
"Hail, Life! of God divinest emanation!"
But shrink from the drear depth, and call
Its valley Death. Ye know not that as high
As the swollen waters wash the sky,
So deep the furrow's vale must sink below,
Nor that these heaving seas right on forever go.

Earth's tombs are doors to heaven; its graves
Types of those fluctuant waves
That bear you on to fulness and to bliss.
If the ascendant wave,
Or its green type, the grave,
A moment from you hide your foregone peers,
Be sure of this:
The coming surge will buoy you to the spheres
That for your re-wed souls have long
Hung silent 'mid the voiceful throng,
Thenceforth attuned to join the everlasting song.
Why, then, those sad eyes, red with bitter weeping,
Turn ye so heavily to the cold
Earth-grave, whose dark vault hath the keeping
Of your worn vestures only, when,
Flinging them lightly off again,
The soul remounts, with broad wing sweeping
The blue and gold,

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The sunshine and the sky?
Or why so earnestly
Heed that which only wraps you, and forget
What things ye are and must be, in despite
Of this which men call Death, which yet
Is newer life, the sunshine and the light?

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AYMEE: A TALE OF ITALY.

BY AMANDA M. DOUGLASS.

THERE was a beautiful, fertile valley in the southern part of Italy, the fair land poets tell us of in their glowing verses, and painters shadow forth on the canvas; yet all that was ever pictured, told or sung, could hardly have been as lovely as this spot of Eden-robed beauty. It was nearly hidden by tall trees, whose gorgeous foliage glinted and gleamed in the brilliant sunshine, and laded the air with a fragrant perfume, mingled with the rich lusciousness of orange-groves, and the aroma of countless flowers, whose varied beauty lent a charm to the fairest scene ever given to earth. And there was many a clear, beautiful stream, edged with radiant flowers, wherein were mirrored the stars by night, and the glorious sun and cloudless sky by day.

In this beautiful place dwelt Miralva, the renowned lion-tamer. Many were the stories told of his wondrous skill in subduing even the fiercest animals; how, under his power, they became gentle and tractable, and suffered him to caress and fondle them. But there was one among them that no kindness could subdue, nor severity conquer. He had not been long from his forest-lair, it is true; but, if gentle means could have won him, he would soon have become accustomed to his new home, for Miralva was very kind. But his proud nature, the nature that had been formed by dwelling in the boundless wilds, and roaming free and fetterless, could not brook confinement and restraint; so, day after day did he roam restlessly up and down his narrow cage, dragging his heavy chain, and growling fiercely whenever his keeper approached with his food; for not a servant dared enter the room containing his cage.

And there was a fair maiden dwelling with the lion-tamer,—the peer-

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less Aymee, — more beautiful than any image fashioned by painter's pencil, for she was formed by a hand greater than them all, even that of God. O, she was strangely beautiful, with her face of Grecian mould, and waves of rich golden hair, that fell in clustering ringlets below her waist; and her deep blue eyes held such a glorious light, that the gleams, stealing through the long lashes, irradiated her whole face; and, as she lay, one summer afternoon, reclining on a flower-strewn couch, in her vine-wreathed balcony, where the light and shade were blending joyously, you would have thought more likely she was the guardian angel of that glorious valley than anything mortal.

Suddenly she started from her revery, and, as she shook off the flowers, the air grew heavy with their perfume. Leaning over the railing, as if listening for the sound that had disturbed her, she caught it again, and, hastily descending the balcony, walked to another part of the building, where, lazily stretched in the sunshine, lay a stout, good-natured servant. Placing her tiny hand upon his shoulder, she said,

"Pedro!"

The man started, rubbed his eyes, and bowed.

"Hark, Pedro!" she said; "heardst thou not a cry, as of distress? Something is wrong, I fear me, and Miralva is absent."

Pedro listened a moment, and, shrugging his shoulders, replied, "It is only that terrible lion, trying to get out, lady."

"No; surely that is a cry of distress; let us go and see."

"No, no, lady; perhaps he has broken his cage;" and Pedro drew back.

"No, that cannot be," replied the fair girl; "at least, let us go to the room. Come;" and she turned to go.

Pedro followed her, for to him she seemed a sacred being, and he looked upon her with a species of veneration. Through the long corridor they went, each step bringing them nearer the room from whence proceeded the cries of fearful distress. Pausing at the door, Pedro said,

"Do not go in, lady; he is in a terrible rage, and will tear you in pieces."

"No, it is not rage," she said, in her clear, musical tones. "Unbar the door."

"Lady!" and the terrified servant fell on his knees.

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"He cannot hurt us, good Pedro," she said, smilingly; "he is chained in his cage, and surely we may look at him. Open the door for me."

Tremblingly the servant obeyed. Cautiously the maiden peered through the slight aperture, and then, flinging the door wide open, exclaimed,

"Look, Pedro!"

The man glanced furtively at the cage, as the lion, startled by their sudden appearance, was for a moment silent. As the maiden said, his cries proceeded from distress rather than rage, for, as he had paced up and down his cage, he had wound his chain around him, and, in his ineffectual attempts to free himself, had only tightened it, until he was nearly strangled. One more desperate struggle, one more wild cry of anguish, and the noble lion lay exhausted, moaning piteously.

"O, Pedro, what can we do for him?" and the maiden clasped her hands in distress.

"Nothing, lady, nothing. For worlds I would not venture in his cage."

"But, surely, he would not hurt us when we came to relieve his sufferings!" and the maiden walked slowly to the side of his cage, where he lay. There was nothing of hate in the large gray eyes, turned so imploringly toward her, she thought, and the low moans pierced her heart. "Open his cage for me, Pedro," she said, after a moment's pause.

"O, lady, lady, do not venture in! for if aught befell thee, my master would never forgive me. Do not go, dear lady."

"But he will die, Pedro, if we do not unwind his chain. I know he will not injure us," she continued, in her sweet, fearless manner, as she placed her hand on the bolt.

The firm grasp of Pedro pushed it aside, for he could not deny the beautiful pleader.

Slowly she entered the cage of the fierce but now powerless lion, and she walked fearlessly toward him, laying her soft, white hand upon his head, and looking kindly in his eyes. The lion ceased his moaning.

"Assist me, good Pedro," she said, as she vainly strove to lift the heavy chain.

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Tremblingly Pedro obeyed, expecting to be torn limb from limb, as he unwound the chain, and, ere it was hardly finished, bounded from the cage.

For a moment the lion stood erect in his majesty, and then leaned gratefully toward the fair maiden. She had no dread or fear of death; her life had been one beautiful, sinless dream; and, in her pure warm-heartedness, she flung her arms around the lion's neck, and sang to him, in her free and joyous strains, until the room resounded with her wondrous melody; and the lion leaned his head amid the golden curls on her fair shoulder, enchanted with the love of his new-found friend.

Many a day afterward did the beautiful maiden sit in the cage of the lion, singing her fairy songs, or twining gay flowers in his shaggy hair, while he gazed on her with his large gray eyes so kindly and gently. Never once did he offer to harm her, though to all others he was as fierce as ever, not even suffering Pedro to approach him. Strange friends were those, the terrible lion, that every one feared, and the gentle maiden, beloved by all who knew her; but it was the love of a pure, untainted heart, ere aught like worldliness had blighted its fine, delicate feelings.

But a change came to the home of the fair Aymee. The lion-tamer died, and her high-born kinsmen took her from the beautiful valley-home to the proud city of Rome; and the lion she had so loved broke his chains, and fled gladly back to his forest lair.

And the peerless Aymee, — how fared she at Rome?

O, she was beloved and worshipped; for she was so wondrously beautiful, and so kind and gentle withal, that she seemed a very angel to those around her. Surrounded by every luxury that boundless wealth could devise, and arrayed with rare and costly jewels, and fine, delicate robes, she was the star of many a gay assemblage; and the proudest nobles sued for the love she could not bestow, for, ere this, her heart had been given to another; and she had learned life's sweetest lesson, — how the heart may tremble with its weight of happiness, and the eye tint all whereon it gazes with its own sunny rose-hues, and the ear drink in no sound but that of sweetest melody. O, she was gloriously happy!

* * * * * * *

In a small, low room, faintly penetrated by the dying sunset, was collected a group whose faces wore a strange expression of mingled joy and

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anxiety. The silence was broken, now and then, by a low whisper, when, suddenly, the door opened, and a slight female form, enveloped in a dark mantle, entered. For a moment she hesitated, and gazed around her in embarrassment; and then, throwing aside her mantle, took the proffered seat, while a hum of approbation ran through the assembly. It was the beautiful Aymee; but what did she here?—she, whose place was with the dancers in the festive hall. There were no jewels braided in her hair; no gay attire displayed her finely-moulded form; but her eyes were radiant with the light of a strange happiness, and the color came and went on her fair cheek, as she met the gaze of those earnest faces, bent so inquiringly upon her.

An old man arose, one who had seen the light and shade of many a long year, while the white locks flowing on his shoulders gave him a reverend look; and, turning to the maiden, he said, in kindly tones,

"Hast thou come to link thy destiny with ours, fair child?"

"I have come to bear witness for Him who redeemed me," she replied; and her clear, musical voice sounded pleasantly through the apartment.

"But bethink thee, maiden; hast thou clear evidence of thy acceptance? These are indeed perilous times, and for one so young and beautiful the world has many charms. Wealth hath lain luxuries lavishly at thy feet; and, when thy friends gayly seek to win thee back to the position thou hast filled so triumphantly, canst thou turn to the despised Jesus of Nazareth, without a sigh of regret? and, when strains of delicious music greet thy ear, and the feet of the merry dancers make music in the perfumed halls, wilt thou never long for thine olden place among them? Think, dear maiden, if thou canst part with all these."

"I have danced with the gayest, until my feet were weary," the maiden said; "I have sung sweet songs, till my heart well-nigh wept with a strange, unutterable sadness; and I have lain on couches of flowers, and been lulled to sleep with sweet, gushing minstrelsy; but nothing calmed my heart like the wondrous story of Him who died on the cross, and opened for us the golden gates of paradise; and I prayed that the king of glory would enfold me in his arms, and lead me by the still waters where my feet might never stray nor grow weary, even to the fadeless hills of the far-off land, with its river of life, and streets of shin-

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ing gold; and the perishing things of earth can no more bind my heart, for it is filled with a hope incorruptible, that fadeth not away."

"But, again, maiden; life's bark, though it be filled with hopes of Christ, saileth not always in calm seas; and to thee may come dark hours, when the children of the world shall persecute and revile thee, and deprive thee of thy high estate; and canst thou bear the blight of poverty, the taunts of bitterness? and, it may be, fair maiden, thou shalt be called upon to seal thy testimony with blood; canst thou suffer for his sake?"

"I have read," she replied,—and her voice seemed to tremble in its liquid sweetness,—"I have read of him we worship, how he had not where to lay his head, and that, in the cheerless night-time, he knelt alone and prayed for strength, and there was none to comfort him; and how he died amid shame and bitter suffering; and I have longed, not for a life of ease, but rather that, when earth-scenes died on my vision, I might kneel in the sunlight of glory gleaming from his throne, and say I too had suffered for his dear name."

"Thou art indeed worthy of the name of a Christian," the old man said; and, laying his trembling hands on her golden hair, prayed God would bless her, and keep her faithful; and in the dusky twilight did the fair Aymee receive the rites of the Christian church.

The ceremony was scarcely over ere there was a stir outside, and the door was flung quickly open, and a voice said, "God help us, for we are sorely tried. This day hath an edict gone forth from the Emperor Aurelian, proclaiming death to the Christians, of every degree."

A sudden terror fell upon that little assembly; there were blanched cheeks and clasped hands; but the fearless maiden stood in the midst of them, her white robe and golden hair shining in the gathering darkness, and in calm, clear tones she said,—

"Shall we shrink from this new danger? Shall we waver and fear because the God that hath so kindly cared for us wishes our presence in his faultless paradise, where there shall be no more sorrow? O, let us go boldly, fearing neither torture nor death, while we have *his* love abiding in us."

And they parted tearfully, all clinging to one beautiful hope, and

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knowing not but they should next meet in the Eden-land, to go no more out from the presence of their God.

One night spent amid the splendor of her luxurious apartments, and the next saw the pure-hearted maiden in a dreary prison.

Again the sun-rays were shedding their dying light on the proud city of Rome, and their lingering beams stole through the barred window, and lay like a trembling bird at the feet of the fair Aymee. And, as she listened, the lock of her prison-door grated harshly; and, another moment, her lover knelt beside her, and twined his arms around her trembling form; and, when the sunlight had faded, they sat in all the silence of wordless grief. At length he said, in sorrowful tones,

"To-morrow, my beautiful Aymee, will be a fearful day in thy life-history. O, is there not enough in life, fair as it may be to thee, in love, — true, earnest love, — to win thee from this mad delusion?"

"It is no delusion," she replied, slowly. "Think you those who have died for its sake could have perished so fearlessly but for the glimpses they had of the glorious land beyond; and this Nazarene whom men despise, — think you *he* could have suffered and died unmurmuringly, but for the wondrous love he bore to the lost children of earth? And this eternity, this long-enduring forever! — O, it would be a fearful thing to barter a crown of glory, and a fadeless heaven, for a few short hours of earthly bliss."

"But I *cannot* give thee up to this terrible death, my own beloved. I have sung sweet songs to thee, all-glorious with the bliss of future years, when we should glide down life's stream, with naught but cloudless skies and fragrant flowers overhanging our way; and I cannot give up the beautiful hope that has stayed my heart so long, and go alone through life. O, my own! yield but for a day only, and, in thy trial hour, do homage to the gods of Rome; then we will away to some fair isle, where thou shalt worship Jesus of Nazareth, with none to harm thee. Only for a brief space of time need thou worship other gods."

"There was one who denied his Saviour once," she said, sorrowfully, "and he repented him bitterly, afterward; no, I cannot deny him who died for me, — not for an hour, even. I cannot take another name on my lips."

In the still, dusky twilight did he plead for his lone, earnest love; but

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his eloquence turned not the maiden's heart. There was a wild struggle between the intensity of earthly love and the holy faith she bore her Saviour; but she turned not from duty, parting with the last beautiful earthly hope, for the sake of her Redeemer; and, in the clear light of the morning, fearlessly gave her testimony for his dear sake.

In all her glorious beauty, in the light of her youth and innocence, they condemned her to a terrible death,—to be destroyed by wild beasts. Was it any wonder she should tremble at the fate awaiting her? Older hearts than hers had shrunk back appalled, and denied the Saviour who died for them, in their terror; and could she, a delicate maiden, meet this fearful death?

Gloriously rose the sun on the splendor of ancient Rome. Gay voices and light laughs were heard in her crowded streets, and people were hurrying to and fro, as on a gala-day; and, ere the sun was half spent, the vast amphitheatre grew crowded with human forms, and eager faces peered curiously around; and they could sit calmly gazing on that terrible spectacle, and watch the fairest life go out, as a thing of naught. O, strange, cold hearts!

They led forth the fair Aymee, to suffer for her faith. O, beautiful she looked, in her pure white robes; and the sunlight, gleaming on the golden hair that shaded her stainless brow, formed an aureole, seeming as if God had already crowned her, as,

> "With firm, unshrinking step,
> The fearful path she trod,
> And gave, with woman's deathless love,
> Her being to her God."

"Let me die free," she said, when they would have bound her; and they left her standing by the marble pillar, fetterless as an Eden bird.

A breathless silence ran through the vast assembly, as they gazed on that vision of radiant loveliness; then the doors of the vivaria were thrown open, and a fierce, angry roar echoed through the spacious building; but the maiden only clasped her slender hands more tightly, while from her lips came the clear, swelling tones of the Christian's triumph hymn, as the lion bounded in the arena. Nearer, nearer to the gentle maiden,

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and then he crouched down at her feet, with a glad cry of surprise; for the friends of the beautiful valley had recognized each other.

From some gathered there came expressions of delight; from others, murmurs of disapprobation; and cries of sorcery and witchcraft were heard from many a lip. O, those were merciless hearts!

The stern face of the prefect gleamed on the scene. "Have you no other animals, that you must bring this dainty, over-fed one?" he asked of the keeper.

Again the doors of the vivaria opened, and two hungry tigers rushed toward the maiden; but the lion met them gallantly. Fierce and terrible was the encounter, and eagerly were the faces bent upon that fearful scene. Bravely did the lion defend the fair girl from the angry tigers that would have torn her limb from limb; and, at length, they lay stretched, bleeding and lifeless, on the ground, while a deafening shout rang through the theatre.

But the brave lion was sorely wounded; and, slowly dragging his painful, bleeding limbs to the feet of the unharmed maiden, he lay gasping for breath. Down beside him knelt Aymee, and, twining her white arms around his neck, sang for him the simple melody that had first soothed his proud spirit. The last sound fell upon the air with lingering sweetness, and died away like the remembrance of a summer dream.

"Part them, and take away the animals," said the prefect.

The keeper approached, and unwound her arms; but her head fell down heavily, and, as he looked on the beautiful face, he said,

"They have died together!"

It was even so. God had mercifully sent his angel for the unsullied spirit; and, in the full glory of the mid-day sun, she had gone to the land above, to rest in the Redeemer's bosom, and go no more out from the presence of the living God.

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WIND-WHISPERS.

BY WILLIAM H. EGLE.

I've roamed o'er New England's vales to-day,
And stood on her pleasant hills;
I've sat and heard the robin's lay,
As it chimed with the laughing rills.

And I searched around for the gentle things
That adorn this world of ours;
But I found the song that the north wind sings
Was death to the summer flowers.

O, bitterly, bitterly mourned I o'er
The fate of earth's choicest gems,
Which the angels strewed on its carpeted floor,
To pluck for their diadems.

O, I love to sit 'neath the oak-tree's shade,
As the sunshine creeps through the leaves,
And hark to the wind, with its mournful wail,
O'er the fading earth-glory that grieves;

For a dreamy spell comes over my heart,
And memories dim and far,
Which form of my shadowy life a part,
As *all* things dreamy are.

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'T is a happy thing to sit and dream
Away life's weariest hours,
For our very lives, to the poet's heart,
Seem like to the summer flowers.

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LIFE'S DEAREST TREASURE.

BY MRS. ESTHER MARIE STOWELL.

O, GIVE me a heart that is warm as the sun,
As he smiles from his heaven of blue,
And there let me bask, till existence is done,
In the sunshine of feeling so true!

I ask not for splendor or riches untold,
'T is the wealth of *affection* I prize,
For better to me than bright jewels or gold
Is a welcome from love-beaming eyes.

A smile from the heart! O, how quickly it stills
Each emotion that troubles the breast,
While each little vein of our being it fills
With the rapture of heaven-born rest!

The lake that doth mirror the gems of the night
In the depths of its bosom the while,
Reflects e'en the spirit's own beautiful light,
As it thrills to an answering smile.

Then give me a heart that will answer to mine,
Though it be with a smile or a tear;
That grief and misfortune will closer entwine
In a sympathy fond and sincere!

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Unfading and pure are the blossoms I crave,
They are dearer than riches or fame;
For these are but shadows that point to the grave,
That enshrouds e'en the proudest one's name!

But Love will endure when the spirit's frail shrine
Shall have wasted and mouldered away;
Transplanted, 't will bloom with new lustre divine
In an *Eden* of infinite day.

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THE PARTING KISS.

BY CHARLES H. STEWART.

One fond accent, ere we part,
Fondly weep, and bid adieu;
I must wander, though my heart,
Till we meet, shall throb for you.

Let me kiss that trembling tear
From thy cheek, so pure and white;
Though I am gone, my heart is here,
And shall be till we reünite.

All my dreams, I swear, and heart,
Shall be thine, o'er every spell;
One kind kiss, then, ere we part,
Drop a tear, and bid farewell.

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